

# In the United States Court of Federal Claims

## OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 07-079V

Filed: August 16, 2013

Not to be Published

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ROSS KRONENTHAL and ELAINE S.	*	
BATCHEV, natural parents and guardians	*	
of, Steven Kronenthal, a minor,	*	Autism; Failure to Prosecute; Failure
	*	To Follow Court Orders; Dismissal.
Petitioners,	*	
v.	*	
	*	
SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND	*	
HUMAN SERVICES,	*	
	*	
Respondent.	*	
	*	

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### DECISION<sup>1</sup>

On January 31, 2007, Petitioners filed a Petition for Vaccine Compensation in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (“the Program”), alleging that their son, Steven, was injured by a vaccine or vaccines listed on the Vaccine Injury Table. See § 14.

On January 3, 2013, I sent a copy of my order, granting the motion of Petitioners’ attorney to withdraw. On that same day, Petitioners were ordered to inform the court whether Petitioners intended to proceed with this case. The order was sent to Petitioner’s address of record.

Petitioners filed a Notice of Intent to Remain in the Program on January 22, 2013. Petitioners additionally filed a Court Order from the State of New York regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I intend to post this decision on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-347, § 205, 116 Stat. 2899, 2913 (codified as amended at 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2006)). In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to delete medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will delete such material from public access.

mother's name change, a Birth Certificate of Minor, and an additional Notice of Intent to Remain in the Program, on January 23, 2013.

On January 31, 2013, I ordered Petitioners to file a Medical Doctor's opinion, within in 90 days, stating that one or more vaccinations caused an injury to Steven. Petitioners failed to respond to that Order.

On June 14, 2013, Petitioners were again ordered to inform the court whether they intended to proceed with this case, or otherwise show cause, within thirty days, why this case should not be dismissed for failure to prosecute. The order was sent to Petitioners' address of record by certified mail, and was returned to the court as undeliverable. The court endeavored to find a new address for Petitioners, to no avail.

## I

### THE OMNIBUS AUTISM PROCEEDING

This case is one of more than 5,400 cases filed under the Program in which petitioners alleged that conditions known as "autism" or "autism spectrum disorders" ["ASD"] were caused by one or more vaccinations. A detailed history of the controversy regarding vaccines and autism, along with a history of the development of the OAP, was set forth in the six entitlement decisions issued by three special masters as "test cases" for two theories of causation litigated in the OAP and will not be repeated here.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, the Petitioners' Steering Committee ["PSC"], an organization formed by attorneys representing petitioners in the OAP, litigated six test cases presenting two different theories on the causation of ASDs. The first theory alleged that the measles portion of the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine could cause ASDs. That theory was presented in three separate Program test cases during several weeks of trial in 2007. The second theory alleged that the mercury contained in thimerosal-containing vaccines could directly affect an infant's brain, thereby substantially contributing to the causation of ASD. That theory was presented in three additional test cases during several weeks of trial in 2008.

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<sup>2</sup> The Theory 1 cases are *Cedillo v. HHS*, No. 98-916V, 2009 WL 331968 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009); *Hazlehurst v. HHS*, No. 03-654V, 2009 WL 332306 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009); *Snyder v. HHS*, No. 01-162V, 2009 WL 332044 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009). The Theory 2 cases are *Dwyer v. HHS*, No. 03-1202V, 2010 WL 892250 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010); *King v. HHS*, No. 03-584V, 2010 WL 892296 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010); *Mead v. HHS*, No. 03-215V, 2010 WL 892248 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010).

Decisions in each of the three test cases pertaining to the PSC's first theory rejected the petitioners' causation theories. *Cedillo*, 2009 WL 331968, *aff'd*, 89 Fed. Cl. 158 (2009), *aff'd*, 617 F.3d 1328 (Fed. Cir. 2010); *Hazlehurst*, 2009 WL 332306, *aff'd*, 88 Fed. Cl. 473 (2009), *aff'd*, 604 F.3d 1343 (Fed. Cir. 2010); *Snyder*, 2009 WL 332044, *aff'd*, 88 Fed. Cl. 706 (2009).<sup>3</sup> Decisions in each of the three "test cases" pertaining to the PSC's second theory also rejected the petitioners' causation theories, and petitioners in each of the three cases chose not to appeal. *Dwyer*, 2010 WL 892250; *King*, 2010 WL 892296; *Mead*, 2010 WL 892248. Thus, the proceedings in these six test cases are concluded. Petitioners remaining in the OAP must now decide whether to pursue their cases, and submit new evidence on causation, or take other action to exit the Program. The Petitioners in this case have failed to inform the court how they intend to proceed.

## II

### FAILURE TO PROSECUTE

It is Petitioners' duty to ensure the court has a valid address to which it can send filings. Failure to respond to a court order because Petitioners have failed to update their address of record is deemed noncompliance with a court order. As I reminded Petitioners in my Order dated June 14, 2013, failure to follow court orders, as well as failure to file medical records or an expert medical opinion, shall result in dismissal of petitioner's claim. *Tsekouras v. Sec'y, HHS*, 26 Cl. Ct. 439 (1992), *aff'd per curiam*, 991 F.2d 810 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *Sapharas v. Sec'y, HHS*, 35 Fed. Cl. 503 (1996); Vaccine Rule 21(b).

## III

### CAUSATION IN FACT

To receive compensation under the Program, Petitioners must prove either 1) that their son, Steven, suffered a "Table Injury" – i.e., an injury falling within the Vaccine Injury Table – corresponding to one of his vaccinations, or 2) that Steven suffered an injury that was actually caused by a vaccine. *See* §§ 300aa-13(a)(1)(A) and 300aa-11(c)(1). Under the Vaccine Act, a special master cannot find a petitioner has proven her case by a preponderance of the evidence based upon "the claims of a petitioner alone, unsubstantiated by medical records or by medical opinion." 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-13(a) (2006). Petitioners have failed to file sufficient medical records and evidence in this case. Thus, an examination of the record did not uncover any evidence that Petitioners' son Steven suffered a "Table Injury." Further, the record does not contain a medical opinion or any other persuasive evidence indicating that Steven's autism spectrum disorder was vaccine-caused.

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<sup>3</sup> Petitioners in *Snyder* did not appeal the decision of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

Accordingly, it is clear from the record in this case that Petitioners have failed to demonstrate either that Steven suffered a “Table Injury” or that his injuries were “actually caused” by a vaccination. **This case is dismissed for insufficient proof and for failure to prosecute. The clerk shall enter judgment accordingly.**

**The clerk of the court shall forward a copy of this Order to petitioners by certified mail, return receipt requested.**

Any questions regarding this Order may be directed to my law clerk, Danielle Sgro, at (202) 357-6384.

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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George L. Hastings, Jr.  
Special Master