

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

**No. 03-2352**

**Filed: October 24, 2011**

(Not to be Published)

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LAURA ANN HAMMERS, a minor by \*  
her parent and natural guardian, \*  
TROY HAMMERS, \*

Petitioner, \*

v. \*

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND \*  
HUMAN SERVICES \*

Respondent. \*

\*\*\*\*\*

Autism; Dismissal; Insufficient Proof of  
Causation; Attorneys' Fees and Costs

**DECISION**

**DISMISSING PETITION AND AWARDING ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS <sup>1</sup>**

On October 10, 2003, petitioner filed a Short-Form Autism Petition for Vaccine Compensation in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (“the Program”),<sup>2</sup> on behalf of his minor child, Laura Ann Hammers (“Laura”), which adopted the Master Autism Petition for Vaccine Compensation. The information in the record, however, does not show entitlement to an award under the Program.

On October 21, 2011, petitioner moved for a decision on the merits of the petition, acknowledging that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate entitlement to compensation.

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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 Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I intend to post this decision on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website, in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), a party has 14 days to identify and move to delete medical or other information, that satisfies the criteria in 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-12(d)(4)(B). Further, consistent with the rule requirement, a motion for redaction must include a proposed redacted decision. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within the requirements of that provision, I will delete such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> The Program comprises Part 2 of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755, codified as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-10 *et seq.* (hereinafter “Vaccine Act” or “the Act”). Hereafter, individual section references will be to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa of the Act.

To receive compensation under the Program, petitioner must prove either 1) that Laura suffered a “Table Injury” – i.e., an injury falling within the Vaccine Injury Table – corresponding to one of Laura’s vaccinations, or 2) that Laura suffered an injury that was actually caused by a vaccine. See §§ 13(a)(1)(A) and 11(c)(1). Examination of the record does not disclose any evidence that Laura suffered a “Table Injury.” Further, the record does not contain a medical expert’s opinion or any other persuasive evidence indicating that Laura’s alleged injury was vaccine-caused.

Under the Vaccine Act, petitioner may not be awarded compensation based on the petitioner’s claims alone. Rather, the petition must be supported by either the medical records or by a medical opinion. § 13 (a)(1). In this case, the record does not contain medical records or a medical opinion sufficient to demonstrate that the vaccinee, Laura Ann Hammers, was injured by a vaccine. For these reasons, in accordance with § 12(d)(3)(A), the **petitioner’s claim for compensation is denied and this case is dismissed for insufficient proof.**

Petitioner has also filed an unopposed motion for an award of attorneys’ fees and costs in this case. Petitioner is entitled to reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs pursuant to §§ 15(b) and (e)(1). Respondent has reviewed the motion and does not object. Petitioner seeks attorneys’ fees and costs in the amount of \$4,349.20. In lieu of filing a Vaccine General Order 9 statement, the firm agrees to reimburse petitioners any costs that petitioners personally incurred that are compensable under § 15 (e)(1).

**The request for attorneys’ fees and costs is granted.** Petitioner is awarded reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs pursuant to §§ 15(b) and (e)(1), as I find that the petition was brought in good faith and upon a reasonable basis, and the amounts requested are reasonable and appropriate. **Pursuant to §15(e), I award a lump sum of \$4,349.20<sup>3</sup> in the form of a check payable jointly to the petitioner and petitioner’s counsel of record, Tobias L. Millroad.**

In the absence of a timely-filed motion for review filed pursuant to Appendix B of the Rules of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the clerk of the court shall enter judgment in accordance herewith.<sup>4</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/ Denise K. Vowell**  
Denise K. Vowell  
Special Master

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<sup>3</sup> This amount is intended to cover all legal expenses incurred in this matter. This award encompasses all charges by the attorney against a client, “advanced costs” as well as fees for legal services rendered. Furthermore, § 15(e)(3) prevents an attorney from charging or collecting fees (including costs) that would be in addition to the amount awarded herein. See generally Beck v. Sec’y of Dep’t Health and Human Services, 924 F.2d 1029 (Fed. Cir.1991).

<sup>4</sup> Entry of judgment can be expedited by each party’s filing of a notice renouncing the right to seek review. See Vaccine Rule 11(a).