

**In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

No. 02-925V

Filed: February 25, 2011

MELISSA KUDASIK and FRANK KUDASIK, III,*
Individually and as Next Friends of
HUNTER FRANK KUDASIK, a minor,

Petitioners,

v.

SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

* Failure to Prosecute;
* Failure to Follow Court
* Orders; Dismissal

DECISION¹

On August 1, 2002, petitioners filed a Petition for Vaccine Compensation in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program [“the Program”],² on behalf of Hunter Frank Kudasik [“Hunter”]. The petition alleges that various vaccinations injured Hunter. The information in the record, however, does not show entitlement to an award under the Program.

¹ Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I intend to post this decision on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website, in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 § 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.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all “§” references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2006).

On September 13, 2010, and November 17, 2010,³ petitioners were ordered to inform the court whether petitioners intended to proceed with this case. Petitioners did not respond to those orders. On December 22, 2010, petitioners were again ordered to inform the court whether petitioners intended to proceed with this case or otherwise show cause within thirty days why this case should not be dismissed for failure to prosecute. That order was sent to petitioners' address of record, as well as to the address identified in note 3, by certified mail. Petitioners failed to respond to that order as well.

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.⁴

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, 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.

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,

³ That order was originally filed and sent to you at your address of record: P.O. Box 251, Menlo, Washington 98561. That order was returned to the court as unclaimed. You are responsible for keeping the court apprised of changes in your contact information. The unclaimed letter noted that you might have left a forwarding address for Raymond, Washington. The court has endeavored to locate a new address there for you. The clerk of court shall send this order to you at your address of record, as well as to the following address:

Melissa and Frank Kudasik
1287 Paulding St. Apt. 105
Raymond, Washington 98577

⁴ The Theory 1 cases are *Cedillo v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 98-916V, 2009 WL 331968 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009); *Hazlehurst v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 03-654V, 2009 WL 332306 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009); *Snyder v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 01-162V, 2009 WL 332044 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Feb. 12, 2009). The Theory 2 cases are *Dwyer v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 03-1202V, 2010 WL 892250 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010); *King v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 03-584V, 2010 WL 892296 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010); *Mead v. Sec'y, HHS*, No. 03-215V, 2010 WL 892248 (Fed. Cl. Spec. Mstr. Mar. 12, 2010).

aff'd, 88 Fed. Cl. 706 (2009).⁵ 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, and noncompliance will not be tolerated. As I reminded petitioners in my December 22, 2010 order, failure to follow court orders, as well as failure to file medical records or an expert medical opinion, shall result in dismissal of petitioners’ 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 Hunter suffered a “Table Injury” – i.e., an injury falling within the Vaccine Injury Table – corresponding to one of his vaccinations, or 2) that Hunter 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 petitioners have proven their case by a preponderance of the evidence based upon “the claims of . . . petitioner[s] 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 Hunter suffered a “Table Injury.” Further, the record does not contain a medical opinion or any other persuasive evidence indicating that Hunter’s autism spectrum disorder was vaccine-caused.

⁵ 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 Hunter 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.**⁶

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Denise K. Vowell
Special Master

⁶ This document constitutes my final “Decision” in this case, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-12(d)(3)(A). If petitioners wish to have this case reviewed by a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, a motion for review of this decision must be filed within 30 days. After 30 days the Clerk of this Court shall enter judgment in accord with this decision. If petitioners wish to preserve whatever right petitioners may have to file a civil suit (that is a law suit in another court) petitioners must file an "election to reject judgment in this case and file a civil action" within 90 days of the filing of the judgment. 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a).