

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 05-471V

Filed: May 12, 2015

* * * * *		UNPUBLISHED
AUGUST STEFKOVICH, <i>parent of N.S.</i> ,	*	
<i>a minor</i> ,	*	
	*	Special Master Gowen
Petitioner,	*	
	*	Joint Stipulation on Damages;
v.	*	MMR Vaccine; Varicella Vaccine;
	*	Seizure Disorder; Developmental
SECRETARY OF HEALTH	*	Delay.
AND HUMAN SERVICES,	*	
	*	
Respondent.	*	
	*	
* * * * *		

Sylvia Chin-Caplan and Ronald C. Homer, Conway, Homer, & Chin-Caplain, P.C., Boston, MA, for petitioner.
Heather Pearlman, United States Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.

DECISION ON JOINT STIPULATION¹

On April 14, 2005, August Stefkovich (“petitioner”) filed a petition on behalf of his minor child, N.S., pursuant to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.² 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2006). Petitioner alleged that as a result of N.S. receiving a measles-mumps-rubella (“MMR”) vaccine and a varicella vaccine on April 9, 2002, N.S. developed a seizure disorder that resulted in global developmental delay. Amended Petition at Intro., filed Jun. 17, 2013. Further,

¹ Because this decision contains a reasoned explanation for the undersigned’s action in this case, the undersigned intends to post this ruling on the website of the United States Court of Federal Claims, 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)). As provided by Vaccine Rule 18(b), each party has 14 days within which to request redaction “of any information furnished by that party: (1) that is a trade secret or commercial or financial in substance and is privileged or confidential; or (2) that includes medical files or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy.” Vaccine Rule 18(b).

² The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program is set forth in 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-1 to -34 (2006) (Vaccine Act or the Act). All citations in this decision to individual sections of the Vaccine Act are to 42 U.S.C.A. § 300aa.

petitioner alleged that N.S. experienced residual effects of her injury for more than six months. Id. at ¶ 28.

On May 11, 2015, the parties filed a stipulation in which they state that a decision should be entered awarding compensation. Respondent denies that N.S.'s seizure disorder, developmental delay, or any other injury was caused-in-fact by her MMR and varicella vaccinations. Stipulation at ¶ 6. Respondent also denies that her current disabilities are sequelae of her alleged injuries. Id. Nevertheless, the parties agree to the joint stipulation, attached hereto as Appendix A. The undersigned finds the stipulation reasonable and adopts it as the decision of the Court in awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

The parties stipulate that petitioner shall receive the following compensation:

A lump sum of \$550,000.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner, August Stefkovich, as guardian/conservator of N.S.'s estate. This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

Id. at ¶ 8.

The undersigned approves the requested amount for petitioner's compensation. Accordingly, an award should be made consistent with the stipulation.

The clerk of the court **SHALL ENTER JUDGMENT** in accordance with the terms of the parties' stipulation.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/ Thomas L. Gowen

Thomas L. Gowen
Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment is expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

6. Respondent denies that N.S.'s seizure disorder, developmental delay, or any other injuries were caused-in-fact by her April 9, 2002, MMR and varicella vaccinations, and denies that her current disabilities are sequelae of her alleged injuries.

7. Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding the compensation described in paragraph 8 of this Stipulation.

8. As soon as practicable after an entry of judgment reflecting a decision consistent with the terms of this Stipulation, and after petitioners have filed an election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services will issue the following vaccine compensation payment:

A lump sum payment of \$550,000.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner, August Stefkovich, as guardian/conservator of N.S.'s estate. 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(1)(B). This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).

9. As soon as practicable after the entry of judgment on entitlement in this case, and after petitioner has filed both a proper and timely election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), and an application, the parties will submit the further proceedings before the special master to award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in proceeding upon this petition.

10. Petitioner and his attorney represent that compensation to be provided pursuant to this Stipulation is not for any items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), to the extent that payment has been made or can reasonably be expected to be made under any State compensation programs, insurance policies, Federal or State health benefits programs (other than Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.

§ 1396 et seq.)), or by entities that provide health services on a pre-paid basis.

11. Payment made pursuant to paragraph 8, and any amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 9 of this Stipulation will be made in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(i), subject to the availability of sufficient statutory funds.

12. The parties and their attorneys further agree and stipulate that, except for attorneys' fees and costs and past unreimbursable expenses, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation will be used solely for the benefit of N.S. as contemplated by a strict construction of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a) and (d), and subject to the conditions of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g) and (h).

13. Petitioner represents that he presently is, or within 90 days of the date of judgment will become, duly authorized to serve as guardian/conservator of N.S.'s estate under the laws of the State of Texas. No payments pursuant to this Stipulation shall be made until petitioner provides the Secretary with documentation establishing his appointment as guardian of N.S.'s estate. If petitioner is not authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction to serve as guardian of the estate of N.S. at the time a payment pursuant to this Stipulation is to be made, any such payment shall be paid to the party or parties appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction to serve as guardian/conservator of the estate of N.S. upon submission of written documentation of such appointment to the Secretary.

14. In return for the payments described in paragraphs 8 and 9, petitioner, in his individual capacity and as legal representative of N.S., on behalf of himself, N.S., and her heirs, executors, administrators, successors or assigns, does forever irrevocably and unconditionally release, acquit and discharge the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services from any and all actions or causes of action (including agreements, judgments, claims, damages,

loss of services, expenses and all demands of whatever kind or nature) that have been brought, could have been brought, or could be timely brought in the Court of Federal Claims, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 et seq., on account of, or in any way growing out of, any and all known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected personal injuries to or death of N.S. resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the MMR and varicella vaccinations administered on April 9, 2002, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about April 14, 2005, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 05-471V.

15. If N.S. should die prior to entry of judgment, this agreement shall be voidable upon proper notice to the Court on behalf of either or both of the parties.

16. If the special master fails to issue a decision in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation or if the Court of Federal Claims fails to enter judgment in conformity with a decision that is in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation, then the parties' settlement and this Stipulation shall be voidable at the sole discretion of either party.


17. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, as amended, except as otherwise noted in paragraph 9 above. There is absolutely no agreement on the part of the parties hereto to make any payment or to do any act or thing other than is herein expressly stated and clearly agreed to. The parties further agree and understand that the award described in this Stipulation may reflect a compromise of the parties' respective positions as to liability and/or amount of damages, and further, that a change in the nature of the injury or condition or in the items of compensation sought, is not grounds to modify or revise this agreement.

Respectfully submitted,


PETITIONER:


AUGUST STEFKOVICH

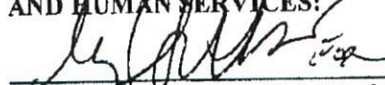
**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
PETITIONER:**

 by Joseph Leppen
Rule 83.1 (c)(2)
RONALD C. HOMER
Counsel of Record for Petitioner
Conway, Homer & Chin-Caplan, P.C.
16 Shawmut Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 695-1990


**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:**


VINCENT J. MATANOSKI
Deputy Director
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES:**


A. MELISSA HOUSTON, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP
Director, Division of Injury
Compensation Programs
Healthcare Systems Bureau
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Parklawn Building, Mail Stop 11C-26
Rockville, MD 20857

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
RESPONDENT:**


HEATHER L. PEARLMAN
Senior Trial Attorney
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146
(202) 353-2699

Dated: 05/11/15