

In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS
No. 15-469V
(Not to be published)

JOSEPH STOUT,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

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Filed: March 11, 2016

Decision by Stipulation; Damages;
Influenza (“flu”) Vaccine;
Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”);
Attorneys’ Fees & Costs

Howard Dale Mishkind, Mishkind Law Firm Co., L.P.A., Beachwood, OH, for Petitioner.

Gordon Shemin, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES AND ATTORNEYS’ FEES¹

On May 8, 2015, Petitioner Joseph Stout filed an action seeking compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (the “Vaccine Program”)². Petitioner alleges that he suffered Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”) and related complications as a result of receiving an influenza (“flu”) vaccine on or about November 30, 2012.

¹ Because this decision contains a reasoned explanation for my action in this case, I will 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)). As provided by 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-12(d)(4)(B), however, the parties may object to the posted decision’s inclusion of certain kinds of confidential information. Specifically, under 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). Otherwise, the whole decision will be available to the public. (*Id.*)

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.A. § 300aa-10-§ 300aa-34 (West 1991 & Supp. 2002). All citations in this decision to individual sections of the Vaccine Act are to 42 U.S.C.A. § 300aa.

Respondent denies that Mr. Stout's GBS or any related medical problems were caused by his receipt of the flu vaccine. Nonetheless both parties, while maintaining their above-stated positions, agreed in a stipulation filed March 10, 2016 that the issues before them can be settled, and that a decision should be entered awarding Petitioner compensation. ECF No. 15.

I have reviewed the file, and based upon that review, I conclude that the parties' stipulation is reasonable. I therefore adopt it as my decision in awarding damages on the terms set forth therein.

The stipulation awards:

A lump sum of \$165,000.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner. This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. §300aa-15(a).

ECF No. 15 at ¶ 8.

On March 10, 2016, the parties also filed a stipulation, this time in regards to attorney's fees and costs incurred in this case. ECF No. 16. I conclude that the parties' stipulation on attorney's fees and costs is also reasonable. I therefore adopt it as my decision in awarding damages on the terms set forth therein.

The stipulation awards:

A lump sum of \$23,091.28 in the form of a check payable jointly to petitioner and petitioner's attorney, Howard D. Mishkind, for [all] attorneys' fees and costs available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(e).

ECF No. 16 at ¶ 2.³

I approve a Vaccine Program award in the requested amount set forth above to be made to Petitioner. In addition, I also approve of the attorney's fees and costs in the requested amount to be made payable to Petitioner and Petitioner's counsel. In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the clerk of the court is directed to enter judgment herewith.⁴

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/s/ Brian H. Corcoran
Brian H. Corcoran

³ This section of the stipulation also contained a statement in accordance with General Order No. 9 of the Vaccine Program, indicating that Petitioner had incurred no reimbursable costs in pursuit of his claim.

⁴ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), the parties may expedite entry of judgment by jointly (or separately) filing notice(s) renouncing their right to seek review.

Special Master

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

_____)	
JOSEPH STOUT,)	
)	
Petitioner,)	No. 15-469V
)	Special Master Corcoran
v.)	ECF
)	
SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND)	
HUMAN SERVICES)	
)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

STIPULATION

The parties hereby stipulate to the following matters:

1. Petitioner filed a petition for vaccine compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 to 34 (the "Vaccine Program"). The petition seeks compensation for injuries allegedly related to petitioner's receipt of the seasonal influenza ("flu") vaccine, which vaccine is contained in the Vaccine Injury Table (the "Table"), 42 C.F.R. § 100.3(a).
2. Petitioner received his flu vaccination on or about November 30, 2012.
3. The vaccine was administered within the United States.
4. Petitioner alleges that the flu vaccine caused him to suffer Guillain-Barré syndrome ("GBS"), and that he experienced the residual effects of this injury for more than six months.
5. Petitioner represents that there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action for damages as a result of his condition.
6. Respondent denies that the flu immunization caused petitioner's GBS and/or any other injury.

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 petitioner has 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 of \$165,000.00 in the form of a check payable to petitioner. 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 to 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 they have identified to respondent all known sources of payment for items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), including 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 of this Stipulation, and any amount 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 any award for attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and past unreimbursable expenses, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation will be used solely for the benefit of petitioner 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. In return for the payments described in paragraphs 8 and 9, petitioner, in his individual capacity, and on behalf of his heirs, executors, administrators, successors and/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 petitioner resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccination administered on or about November 30, 2012, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about May 8, 2015 in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 15-469V.

14. If petitioner 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.

15. 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.

16. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, 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.

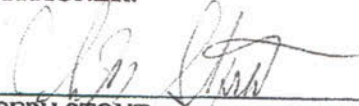
17. This Stipulation shall not be construed as an admission by the United States or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that the flu vaccine caused petitioner's GBS and/or any other injury.

18. All rights and obligations of petitioner hereunder shall apply equally to petitioner's heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and/or assigns.

END OF STIPULATION

Respectfully submitted,

PETITIONER:



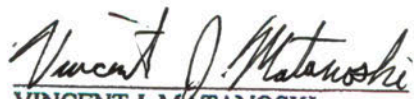
JOSEPH STOUT

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
PETITIONER:**



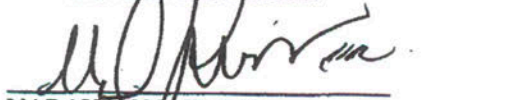
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Dated: March 10, 2016