

# In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 19-145V

UNPUBLISHED

RENE REASKA,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: November 16, 2020

Special Processing Unit (SPU); Joint  
Stipulation on Damages; Influenza  
(Flu) Vaccine; Guillain-Barre  
Syndrome (GBS)

*Shealene Priscilla Mancuso, Muller Brazil, LLP, Dresher, PA, for petitioner.*

*Sarah Christina Duncan, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.*

## **DECISION ON JOINT STIPULATION<sup>1</sup>**

On January 29, 2019, Rene Reaska filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*<sup>2</sup> (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that she suffered Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) resulting from the adverse effects of the influenza (flu) vaccination she received on September 27, 2016. Petition at 1; Stipulation, filed at November 12, 2020, ¶¶ 1-2. Petitioner further alleges that the vaccination was administered in the United States, she experienced the residual effects of her injury for more than six months, and there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action for damages on her behalf as a result of her condition. Petition at 1, 5; Stipulation at ¶¶ 3-5. “Respondent denies that [P]etitioner sustained a GBS Table injury and denies that [P]etitioner’s alleged GBS and its residual effects were caused-in-fact by the flu vaccine. Respondent further denies that the flu vaccine caused [P]etitioner any other injury or her current condition.” Stipulation at ¶ 6.

---

<sup>1</sup> Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I am required to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2012) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact 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 redact such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> 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 (2012).

Nevertheless, on November 12, 2020, the parties filed the attached joint stipulation, stating that a decision should be entered awarding compensation. I find the stipulation reasonable and adopt it as my decision awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Stipulation, **I award** the following compensation:

**A lump sum of \$200,000.00 in the form of a check payable to Petitioner.** Stipulation at ¶ 8. This amount represents compensation for all items of damages that would be available under Section 15(a). *Id.*

I approve the requested amount for Petitioner's compensation. In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the clerk of the court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.<sup>3</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/Brian H. Corcoran**  
Brian H. Corcoran  
Chief Special Master

---

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.



petitioner's alleged GBS and its residual effects were caused-in-fact by the flu vaccine.

Respondent further denies that the flu vaccine caused petitioner any other injury or her current condition.

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 \$200,000.00 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 her 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 of this Stipulation 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 any award for attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and past unreimbursed 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 her individual capacity, and on behalf of 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 petitioner resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccination administered on September 27, 2016, as alleged by petitioner in a petition for vaccine compensation filed on or about January 29, 2019, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 19-145V.

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.



Respectfully submitted,

**PETITIONER:**

*Rene Reaska*  
RENE REASKA

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR  
PETITIONER:**

*Shelene Mancuso*  
SHELENE MANCUSO  
Muller Brazil LLP  
715 Twining Road, Suite 208  
Dresher, PA 19025  
Tel: (215) 885-1655

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:**

*Catharine E. Reeves*  
CATHARINE E. REEVES  
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:**

*CAPT Dale Mishler, D.H.Sc., for*  
TAMARA OVERBY  
Acting Director, Division of Injury Compensation  
Programs (DICP)  
Healthcare Systems Bureau  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Parklawn Building, Mail Stop 08N146B  
Rockville, MD 20857

**ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR  
RESPONDENT:**

*Sarah C. Duncan*  
*by Catharine E. Reeves*  
SARAH C. DUNCAN  
Trial Attorney  
Torts Branch  
Civil Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
P.O. Box 146  
Benjamin Franklin Station  
Washington, DC 20044-0146  
Tel: (202) 514-9729

Dated: 11/12/20