

In the United States Court of Federal Claims
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS
No. 20-198V

BETTY A. DENNIS *Administratrix of*
the ESTATE OF RICHARD P.
DENNIS,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: July 1, 2026

Lawrence R. Cohan, Saltz Mongeluzzi & Bendesky, Philadelphia, PA, for Petitioner.

Michael Bliley, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES¹

On February 25, 2020, Betty Dennis (“Petitioner”), acting as administratrix of the Estate of Richard P. Dennis (“Mr. Dennis”), filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*² (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that Mr. Dennis suffered Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”) following administration of an influenza vaccination on October 3, 2018. Petition at 1. Petitioner also alleged that Mr. Dennis’s death was a sequela of his GBS. *Id.* The case was assigned to the Special Processing Unit of the Office of Special Masters.

On September 11, 2025, a ruling on entitlement was issued, finding Petitioner entitled to compensation for Mr. Dennis’s GBS. On July 1, 2026, Respondent filed a proffer on award of compensation (“Proffer”) indicating Petitioner should be awarded \$375,000.00, representing \$125,000.00 in past pain and suffering and \$250,000.00 for

¹ Because this Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action taken in this case, it must be made publicly accessible and will be posted on the United States Court of Federal Claims’ website, and/or at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/uscourts/national/cofc>, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2018) (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.

² National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2018).

the statutory benefit for a vaccine-injury-related death. Proffer at 2. In the Proffer, Respondent represented that Petitioner agrees with the proffered award. *Id.* Based on the record as a whole, I find that Petitioner is entitled to an award as stated in the Proffer.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Proffer, **I award Petitioner a lump sum payment of \$375,000.00, to be paid through an ACH deposit to Petitioner's counsel's IOLTA account for prompt disbursement to Petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under Section 15(a).

The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Brian H. Corcoran

Brian H. Corcoran
Chief Special Master

³ 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.

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

BETTY A. DENNIS, Administratrix of the
Estate of RICHARD P. DENNIS, Deceased,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

No. 20-198V

Chief Special Master Corcoran
ECF

RESPONDENT’S PROFFER ON AWARD OF COMPENSATION

On February 25, 2020, Betty Dennis, as personal representative of the Estate of Richard Dennis,¹ filed a petition stating that Richard Dennis developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (“GBS”), a Vaccine Table Injury, within the Table time frame following administration of a flu vaccine on October 3, 2018. Petition at 1. Petitioner also alleged that Richard Dennis’s death is a sequela of his GBS. *Id.*

On September 11, 2025, the Chief Special Master issued a Ruling on Entitlement finding petitioner entitled to compensation.² ECF No. 39.

¹ Petitioner filed documentation on February 25, 2020, establishing that on July 15, 2019, she was appointed personal representative of Richard Dennis’ Estate under the laws of the State of Minnesota. *See* Exhibit 5. All references to petitioner herein refer solely to Betty Dennis in her representative capacity as the personal representative of the Estate of Richard Dennis.

² The parties have no objection to the amount of the proffered award of damages. However, respondent reserves his right, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-12(e), to seek review of the Special Master’s September 11, 2025 Ruling on Entitlement, finding petitioner entitled to an award under the Vaccine Act. This right accrues following the issuance of the Damages Decision.

I. Items of Compensation

Based upon the evidence of record, respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded the following:

A. Statutory Benefit

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded **\$250,000.00** for the statutory benefit for a vaccine-injury-related death. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(2). Petitioner agrees.

B. Pain and Suffering

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded **\$125,000.00** in past pain and suffering. Petitioner agrees.

These amounts represent all elements of compensation to which petitioner would be entitled under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a).³ Petitioner agrees.

II. Form of the Award

Respondent recommends that petitioner be awarded a lump sum payment of **\$375,000.00**, in the form of an ACH deposit to petitioner's counsel's IOLTA account for prompt disbursement to petitioner, Betty Dennis, as personal representative of the Estate of Richard Dennis.⁴ Petitioner agrees.

Respectfully submitted,

BRETT A. SHUMATE
Assistant Attorney General

³ This Proffer does not include attorneys' fees and costs, which the parties intend to address after a Damages Decision is issued.

⁴ If for some reason petitioner is not authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction to serve as the personal representative of the Estate of Richard Dennis at the time a payment pursuant to this Proffer is to be made, then any such payment shall be paid to the party or parties appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction to serve as personal representative of the Estate of Richard Dennis upon submission of written documentation of such appointment to the Secretary.

JONATHAN D. GUYNN
Acting Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

HEATHER L. PEARLMAN
Deputy Director
Torts Branch, Civil Division

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/s/ Michael S. Bliley
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Dated: July 1, 2026

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Pursuant to the Rules of the United States Court of Federal Claims, I certify that on this 1st day of July, 2026, a true and correct copy of the foregoing pleading was sent to petitioner's counsel via email at lcohan@smbb.com.

/s/ Michael S. Bliley
MICHAEL S. BLILEY