

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

Filed: September 16, 2025

* * * * * AMBER JONES, Petitioner, v. SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, Respondent. * * * * *	* * * * * * * * * * * *	UNPUBLISHED No. 22-1281V Special Master Dorsey Attorneys' Fees and Costs.
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Jessica Wallace, Siri & Glimstad, LLP, Aventura, FL, for Petitioner.
Elizabeth Andary, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.

DECISION AWARDING ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS¹

On September 13, 2022, Amber Jones ("Petitioner") filed a petition in the National Vaccine Injury Program² alleging that she suffered Bell's palsy as a result of an influenza ("flu") vaccine she received on October 22, 2020. Petition at Preamble (ECF No. 1). The undersigned issued a decision based on stipulation on June 23, 2025. Decision Based on Stipulation dated June 23, 2025 (ECF No. 79).

¹ Because this unpublished Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, the undersigned is required to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims'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, the undersigned agrees that the identified material fits within this definition, the undersigned will redact such material from public access.

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-10 to -34 (2018) ("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.

On July 21, 2025, Petitioner filed an application for attorneys' fees and costs. Petitioner's Motion for Attorneys' Fees and Costs ("Pet. Mot."), filed July 21, 2025 (ECF No. 85). Petitioner requests compensation in the amount of \$52,973.33, representing \$36,349.35 in attorneys' fees and \$16,623.98 in costs. *Id.* at 1. Petitioner warrants that she has not personally incurred any costs in pursuit of her claim for compensation. Statement of Pet. Personal Costs, filed July 18, 2025 (ECF No. 83). Respondent filed his response on July 31, 2025, stating he "is satisfied the statutory requirements for an award of attorneys' fees and costs are met in this case." Respondent's Response to Pet. Mot. ("Resp. Response"), filed July 31, 2025, at 2 (ECF No. 86). Petitioner filed a reply on July 31, 2025, reiterating her request for fees and costs. Pet. Reply to Resp. Response, filed July 31, 2025 (ECF No. 87). The matter is now ripe for disposition.

Petitioner requests the following hourly rates for the work of her counsel: for Ms. Jessica Wallace, \$241.00 per hour for work performed in 2021, \$275.00 per hour for work performed in 2022, \$285.00 per hour for work performed in 2023, \$320.00 per hour for work performed in 2024, and \$359.00 per hour for work performed in 2025; for Ms. Debra Gambella, \$424.00 per hour for work performed in 2024; and for Ms. Dana Smith (Stone), \$360.00 per hour for work performed in 2022. Petitioner also requests rates between \$174.00 and \$195.00 for work of their counsel's paralegals performed from 2021 to 2025.

The undersigned finds the rates consistent with what counsel have previously been awarded for their Vaccine Program work, and finds them to be reasonable herein. The undersigned also finds the 2022 rate for Ms. Smith reasonable, in accordance with the OSM Attorneys' Forum Hourly Rate Fee Schedule for 2022, and appropriate given her years of experience, and the undersigned will grant the request rate. Additionally, the undersigned has reviewed the submitted billing entries and finds the total number of hours billed to be reasonable and will award them in full.

Lastly, the undersigned has reviewed the requested costs and finds them to be reasonable and supported with appropriate documentation. Accordingly, the full amount of costs shall be awarded.

Therefore, the undersigned finds no cause to reduce the requested hours or rates, or the requested costs.

The Vaccine Act permits an award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. § 15(e). Based on the reasonableness of Petitioner's request, the undersigned **GRANTS** Petitioner's motion for attorneys' fees and costs.

Accordingly, the undersigned awards:

Petitioner is awarded attorneys' fees and costs in the total amount of \$52,973.33, to be paid through an ACH deposit to Petitioner's counsel's IOLTA account for prompt disbursement.

In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the Clerk of Court **SHALL ENTER JUDGMENT** in accordance with this Decision.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

/s/ Nora Beth Dorsey

Nora Beth Dorsey
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.