

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 16-0902V

Filed: July 14, 2017

UNPUBLISHED

JERRY BANKS,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Special Processing Unit (SPU);
Attorneys' Fees and Costs

*Alison H. Haskins, Maglio Christopher & Toale, PA, Sarasota, FL, for petitioner.
Sarah Christina Duncan, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.*

DECISION ON ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS¹

Dorsey, Chief Special Master:

On July 29, 2016, petitioner 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 alleged that he suffered Guillain-Barré Syndrome ("GBS") after receiving a tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis ("Tdap") vaccination and an influenza vaccination on October 14, 2015. Petition at 1, ¶¶ 1, 12. On June 16, 2017, the undersigned issued a decision awarding compensation to petitioner based on the parties' stipulation. (ECF No. 31.)

On June 26, 2017, petitioner filed a motion for attorneys' fees and costs. (ECF No. 35.) Petitioner requests attorneys' fees in the amount of \$35,301.80 and attorneys'

¹ Because this unpublished decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, the undersigned intends to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website,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). 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 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).

costs in the amount of \$1,352.76, totaling **\$36,654.56**. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 3-4.) In compliance with General Order #9, petitioner filed a signed statement indicating that petitioner incurred **\$50.36** in out-of-pocket expenses. See Exhibit 25 (ECF No. 35-3). Thus, the total amount requested is **\$36,704.92**.

On July 13, 2017, respondent filed a response to petitioner's motion. (ECF No. 36.) Respondent argues that "[n]either the Vaccine Act nor Vaccine Rule 13 contemplates any role for respondent in the resolution of a request by a petitioner for an award of attorneys' fees and costs." *Id.* at 1. Respondent adds, however, that he "is satisfied the statutory requirements for an award of attorneys' fees and costs are met in this case." *Id.* at 2. Respondent "respectfully recommends that the Chief Special Master exercise her discretion and determine a reasonable award for attorneys' fees and costs." *Id.* at 3.

That same day, the OSM staff attorney managing this SPU case emailed petitioner's counsel (copying respondent's counsel on the correspondence) to ask if petitioner intended to file a reply to respondent's response. See Informal Remark, dated July 14, 2017. Petitioner's counsel indicated petitioner would not be filing a reply. *Id.*

The undersigned has reviewed the billing records submitted with petitioner's request. In the undersigned's experience, the request appears reasonable, and the undersigned finds no cause to reduce the requested hours or rates.

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 the total of \$36,704.92³ as follows:

- **A lump sum of \$36,654.56, representing reimbursement for attorneys' fees and costs, in the form of a check payable jointly to petitioner and petitioner's counsel, Alison Haskins; and**
- **A lump sum of \$50.36, representing reimbursement for petitioner's costs, in the form of a check payable to petitioner.**

Per petitioner's request, the check shall be forwarded to Maglio, Christopher & Toale, PA, 1605 Main Street, Suite 710, Sarasota, FL 34236.

³ This amount is intended to cover all legal expenses incurred in this matter. This award encompasses all charges by the attorney against a client, "advanced costs" as well as fees for legal services rendered. Furthermore, § 15(e)(3) prevents an attorney from charging or collecting fees (including costs) that would be in addition to the amount awarded herein. See *generally Beck v. Sec'y of Health & Human Servs.*, 924 F.2d 1029 (Fed. Cir.1991).

The clerk of the court shall enter judgment in accordance herewith.⁴

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/Nora Beth Dorsey

Nora Beth Dorsey
Chief Special Master

⁴ 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.