UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

IN RE: XARELTO (RIVAROXABAN) * 14-MD-2592

PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION *

Section L

Relates to: All Cases

December 21, 2015

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STATUS CONFERENCE BEFORE THE HONORABLE ELDON E. FALLON UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Appearances:

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Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography using computer-aided transcription software.

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PROCEEDINGS

(December 21, 2015)

THE COURT: Be seated, please. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Let's call the case, please.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: MDL No. 2179, In Re: Xarelto Products Liability Litigation.

THE COURT: Liaison counsel make their appearances for the record, please.

MR. DAVIS: Good morning, Your Honor. Leonard Davis from Herman, Herman & Katz on behalf of the PSC.

MR. IRWIN: Good morning. Jim Irwin for the defendants.

THE COURT: We are here today for our monthly status conference. I have had a moment to talk with the liaison lead counsel and go over the proposed agenda. We will take them in the order presented.

Pretrial orders. Anything?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, Your Honor. Pretrial Order No. 22 was entered December 11. That's new since the last status conference. That order is on the Court's website, which is at www.laed.uscourts.gov, and there's a *Xarelto* tab for that. That order deals with mailing lists for "Dear Doctor" letters.

THE COURT: Proposed Case Management Order No. 3.

MR. DAVIS: Case Management Order No. 4 was recently

entered by the Court. This section, Your Honor, deals with Case Management Order No. 3 and No. 4, and they are interrelated.

Case Management Order No. 4 we are working on right now. It identifies categories agreed upon and sets deadlines for making selections in the bellwether process. The next deadline under CMO 4 is December 23.

THE COURT: Take a look at that, folks, if you haven't seen it. This is the next step in getting a discovery pool. We are now zeroed in on it. BrownGreer is working closely with liaison lead counsel to get together the cases that they have set aside in the discovery pool population selection. It's important that we do that.

As you all know, the concept is to get a discovery pool that's representative of the census of the litigation. It's a larger pool. From that larger pool, then the parties will be able to discover those particular cases. They won't discover any cases outside of that pool or put all their energy and resources on those cases. Those cases then will be the fodder for selecting bellwether cases. It's an important process.

MR. DAVIS: The next item, Your Honor, is the Counsel Contact Information Form. There's nothing new on that. We encourage counsel to continue to complete and submit the information form. Again, PTO 4 and 4A can be found on the

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Court's website.

The next item is MDL Centrality. As the Court is well aware, it's up and running. It's going to be utilized in connection with CMO 4 and the selection process of the pool, as Your Honor recently mentioned.

Item 5 is Plaintiff Fact Sheets. As the Court is aware, there have been a number of plaintiffs' counsel who have reached out and addressed the issue of submitting Plaintiff Fact Sheets. The PSC has encouraged all plaintiffs' counsel to timely submit a Plaintiff Fact Sheet.

What we have told people and we continue to reiterate is that the Court believes that the submission of a Fact Sheet is very important in this litigation, and the Court set up Fact Sheets; and that if individuals have any concern or have some issue with a Fact Sheet, they should submit what they have in the Fact Sheet with the information that they have. They can always supplement and amend a Fact Sheet going forward, but it is very important to submit a Fact Sheet, to send in the verifications, have the core information, and provide the information timely.

Pretrial Order No. 13 deals directly with Plaintiff Fact Sheets if there are any questions. Again, plaintiff liaison counsel, Mr. Meunier's office or my office, is available to assist people if they need some help in understanding what needs to be done with a Fact Sheet.

THE COURT: Yes. I reinforce that. I think the Fact Sheets are important for the plaintiffs to fill out. Defendants are filling out their Fact Sheets. It's important for the plaintiffs to fill out the Fact Sheets. If you don't know all of the answers, answer what you can and submit the Fact Sheet. If you have any difficulty with it, contact liaison counsel.

If we don't hear from you, if you don't do anything, then I assume you are not really interested in pursuing a case in this litigation. Maybe there's other litigation you should be involved in. If I don't hear from you, if you are given an opportunity to do it and you don't do anything at all, then I'm going to assume that you do not wish to be in this litigation. I will have a rule to show cause why you shouldn't be dismissed.

MR. DAVIS: Your Honor, defendants have, in fact, provided to the PSC -- as we discussed, I believe, at the last status conference -- proposed orders to show cause and rules to show cause for failure to timely submit Profile Forms and failure to provide use of the drug.

We have had a number of meet-and-confers.

Sindhu Daniel has been involved in these, and we have spoken to the defendants about these rules. What we have received is lists of the various individuals and counsel who would be subject to these rules. We have reached out and facilitated so

the individuals who may be delinquent can cure these issues and get them addressed.

We have spoken to the defendants about the process going forward. I believe that we are about to have an understanding. We are very close to that and we'll have something in place. Again, the idea is to get the Profile Forms completed, and we encourage people to do that.

The next item that we dealt with -- and, again, Ms. Daniel has helped on this -- is a deadline for submission of Defendant Fact Sheets when amended Plaintiff Fact Sheets are submitted. We are working on that process. Again, core deficiency issues need to be addressed, and we will hopefully have something to the Court relatively soon on that.

The other item that's on this list is that we are well aware of recent deficiency notices that were sent out throughout to plaintiffs' counsel by the defendants. We have addressed that with defense counsel. We understand that they worked to try to get deficiencies and Profile Forms reviewed prior to a deadline. We also understand that there is a December 23 deadline under CMO 4, and those issues will be addressed with counsel between here and there in compliance with CMO 4.

With respect to medical records being available to plaintiffs' counsel, we are still addressing that issue. We will have further discussions with defendants on that.

THE COURT: Anything on bundling?

MR. DAVIS: On bundling, we have reached out to Bayer. We understand that Bayer has had relatively recently a corporate reorganization or structure change. As a result, some of the jurisdictions and locations of the defendants have been changed in that corporate organizational change. We have gotten information from Bayer on that.

We will be providing to the Court just after the first of the year an updated and revised bundled complaint so that the location of Bayer, in particular, will be revised. We will have that to the Court, and we would ask that the Court post it on its website so that counsel can see that form.

THE COURT: How about the Preservation Order?

MR. DAVIS: There's nothing new on that. Obviously, we encourage counsel to be aware of the order that's out there.

On No. 9, the proposed order governing the parties' interaction with MDL plaintiffs' prescribing and treating physicians, which the defendants have called a woodshed order, we will be addressing that issue and will be briefing that matter to the Court.

THE COURT: Take a look at what I have done in other cases, particularly *Vioxx*. If this is different from *Vioxx*, then tell me why it's different.

These types of cases present a little bit more of a complicated issue because the doctors are potential

defendants in these types of cases. Talking with a potential defendant presents some problems, ethical and otherwise, so that's always present. There's also a question of whether or not it helps anyone by having a separate communication.

I get concerned about that oftentimes when, in depositions, those treaters then are asked questions. They may appear reliable and good witnesses, but then it's interjected into the discussion the fact that they talked to the other side. A big deal is made over that, and sometimes credibility is introduced where it really has no place. It's present because that's what happened. To avoid that is something that I'm conscious of too. I will listen to both sides and will hear you.

MR. DAVIS: We will address that, Your Honor, in a briefing schedule.

THE COURT: Anything on discovery?

MR. DAVIS: Your Honor, I report that the 30(b)(6) corporate depositions took place. J&J's took place on December 11, and Bayer's took place on December 15. Those depositions were left open due to some issues that are being further addressed.

The PSC recently provided 10 deposition notices to the defendants. We are in the process of scheduling dates in January and February. We intend that those depositions will be going forward.

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On December 4 the PSC sent a third request for production of documents primarily relating to the reanalysis of the ROCKET AF trial study. We understand that those results were sent by Duke to the defendants, and it dealt with the reassessment of the trial reliability.

We have made a request for that information, and we are hopeful to get that very soon. If there is some issue, we will be addressing that further with the Court. We will reach out to defendants and Duke, and hopefully they will provide that information very, very shortly. I wanted the Court to be aware that that is an issue that's out there and may be brought to the attention of the Court.

On December 15 the PSC provided a number of challenges to defendants' privilege log. We have a meet-and-confer scheduled this week. We are mindful of Pretrial Order No. 19, and we will be addressing privilege issues, Your Honor. We also are aware that the Court has biweekly discovery conferences and these issues, if necessary, will be brought up in those conferences so that they can be addressed.

On deposition guidelines, the parties are conferring on drafting a proposed order. There are about four or so issues that remain open. We will be submitting those to the Court so that the Court can address those in early January before these upcoming depositions, and we will have a

deposition protocol or deposition guidelines in place.

THE COURT: That's important in a case of this sort. You don't need that in a normal case, where the same people take the depositions, because they form this sort of approach just *sub silentio*. They know what to do, how to do it, what they can do, and what they can't do. The deposition protocol in a case of this sort is important because you have a lot of people taking depositions. It's very helpful that depositions be organized in some uniform way.

Also, I will be making this available to my colleagues in state courts so that the depositions hopefully can be taken in the same manner and with the same procedural rules, guidelines, and so forth.

Just be aware of the fact that oftentimes when you begin the protocol, you think you're going to have problems and you think this is the answer to the problems. You get into the depositions and find that you didn't cover this or you didn't cover that, or you don't need this or you don't need that. So don't write it in stone, but get something that you can have some guidance, with the understanding that you may have to have some flexibility to change it as you go on.

MR. DAVIS: Your Honor, the Philadelphia folks were participants in the most recent depositions. We are coordinating with them. I don't know what their thoughts are on protocols. We told them that if they have some issue, they

will address that in their venue, but we certainly will continue to attempt to cooperate and coordinate.

THE COURT: It's helpful for the plaintiff committee to reach out to some of the people that are pursuing the case in state courts so you have some of their input that you can make it known to the defendants and see if you can resolve it.

MR. DAVIS: With respect to discovery issued to third parties, I have already talked about the Duke issue, Your Honor. We have also, on December 16, issued a subpoena to Bernard "Bud" W. Chalecki. So that's a new item that's on the agenda.

Ms. Barrios is here to talk about state/federal coordination.

THE COURT: Dawn, I wrote all of the judges that you gave me a list of. Some of them have indicated that their cases have been transferred to the complex litigation judge in their particular district, so I didn't talk to them.

MS. BARRIOS: Yes, Your Honor. I had spoken with Toni because she called with the issue of some judges saying they didn't have *Xarelto* cases. With your permission and with the defendant's consent, I just want to talk to Toni again to give her an update on the names of the cases.

THE COURT: Good.

MS. BARRIOS: Your Honor, since we have been here last time, there's been a change in the number of state court

cases. There were 51 additional state court cases filed. In those 51, there are 68 plaintiffs that have been added on.

For the record, there are four cases in California; 33 cases in Delaware; two cases in Illinois; only one case in Missouri, but that's in the county of St. Louis, which allows very liberal joinders, so there's 24 plaintiffs there; New Jersey has 5; Pennsylvania has 491 in the consolidated action and one that is not yet consolidated.

Since we last met, Judge New has addressed an issue that was raised by the defendants on a case involving an ischemic stroke. The defendants wanted to move the ischemic stroke case into the consolidated actions. The plaintiff opposed it. Judge New ruled and put it in with the consolidated actions, so they have ischemic stroke there. The next status conference with Judge New is on January 14.

I would like to suggest, Your Honor, that in advance of the next status conference that perhaps your law clerk send a reminder letter to the judges in state court, giving them the phone number and the date again, so that they can participate should they see fit.

THE COURT: Okay. I will do so. Thank you very much.

Anything from the defendants?

MR. IRWIN: Your Honor, did you want to hear about the disposition of the five motions?

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THE COURT: Let's get to that pretty soon, Jim, but not right now.

MR. IRWIN: All is well, Your Honor.

THE COURT: What about matters set for hearing?

MR. DAVIS: That's the one Jim was talking about. Do you want to do it now?

THE COURT: We will do it now, Jim. Do you want to give us a report on that?

MR. IRWIN: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Just by way of background, we tried to encourage plaintiffs to file Fact Sheets. Notice went out. Most individuals filed Fact Sheets or at Contacts were made. least some portion of the Fact Sheets. We didn't hear from four or five individuals, so I set a rule to show cause why those cases should not be dismissed. That's what I'm hearing a response on from the defendants at this time.

Thank you, Your Honor. I will just give MR. IRWIN: you a quick overview, and then I will provide some numbers for the record.

Of the five cases, three of them motions to withdraw were filed by plaintiff counsel because they, in the interim, did file a PFS. If one case, the PFS was uploaded this week. We would suggest that motion is now moot. fifth case, we discovered that a particular plaintiff, Fahy, was, in fact, a New Jersey resident. It was in a bundled case.

So we do not have subject matter. We do not have diversity. We filed a notice of lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

Here are the particulars:

The Ferrington case is Civil Action 15-3230.

That case is represented by Amy Carter from Dallas. That case, the PFS was filed, and they filed a motion to withdraw.

Overshown is Civil Action 15-3232, also represented by Amy Carter, and likewise she filed a motion to withdraw the motion for extension on the grounds that they did, in fact, file their PFS.

Thirdly, the *McWilliams* case, represented by Morris Bart -- and Laura Voght is from Atlanta -- they also filed a motion to withdraw their motion for an extension of time on the grounds they, in fact, did file their PFS.

In the *Lowe* case, which is Civil Action 15-3893, that was filed by Clinton Kelly of The Kelly Firm from Henderson, Tennessee. This week we checked and they, in fact, did file their PFS. They have not filed a motion to withdraw their PFS extension motion, but we would suggest it's now moot. If there are any deficiencies, we will take that up in due course.

Finally, the *Fahy* case, as I mentioned earlier, Civil Action 15-4534, that is the one we discovered in the bundled complaint was a New Jersey resident. We have New Jersey defendants and, therefore, no diversity

jurisdiction. 1 2 We think this process was helpful to raising 3 awareness about the importance of these PFSs. 4 **THE COURT:** I'm happy that all the motions have been 5 rendered moot and the Court need not take any action on it. The next conference is in January. 6 7 MR. DAVIS: January 23, Your Honor. 8 THE COURT: January 23. The following month is 9 February 23. 10 MR. DAVIS: That's at 9:00 in the morning; is that 11 correct? 12 **THE COURT:** Yes, 9:00 in the morning. 13 MR. IRWIN: I think it's January 22. THE COURT: January 22 is the next one. February 23 14 15 is the following one. Everybody have a happy holiday. Thank you for 16 your work in the past year. I look forward to working with you 17 18 next year. 19 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Your Honor. We wish you a 20 happy holiday, your staff, and counsel. (Proceedings adjourned.) 21 * * * 22 23 24 25

CERTIFICATE

I, Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR, Official Court
Reporter for the United States District Court, Eastern District
of Louisiana, certify that the foregoing is a true and correct
transcript, to the best of my ability and understanding, from
the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

<u>s/ Toni Doyle Tusa</u> Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR Official Court Reporter

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