## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT <br> EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

IN RE: XARELTO (RIVAROXABAN) * PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION

Relates to: A11 Cases $* * * * * * * * * * * * * *$

14-MD-2592
Section L
January 22, 2016

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

## Appearances:

For the Plaintiffs:

For the Defendants:
win Fritchie Urquhart \& Moore, LLC
BY: JAMES B. IRWIN, ESQ. 400 Poydras Street, Suite 2700 New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

Official Court Reporter: Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR 500 Poydras Street, Room B-275 New Orleans, Louisiana 70130 (504) 589-7778

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

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## PROCEEDINGS

(January 22, 2016)
THE COURT: Be seated, please. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Call the case, please.
THE DEPUTY CLERK: MDL No. 2592, In Re: Xare7to Products Liability Litigation.

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

MR. MEUNIER: Jerry Meunier, co-1iaison counse1 for plaintiffs.

MR. IRWIN: Good morning, Your Honor. Jim Irwin for Janssen and Bayer.

THE COURT: We are here today for our monthly status conference. We have a couple hundred people on the phone, so please use the microphone.

I met a moment ago with the lead liaison counsel to discuss the agenda. I will take it in the order presented.

MR. MEUNIER: May it please the Court. Your Honor, Jerry Meunier for plaintiffs.

On pretrial orders, there has been one order entered since the last status conference and that is PTO 14B, which provides a consent letter for the release of IMS data with defendant fact sheets. We simply want to remind all plaintiffs' counsel of the need for them to sign those consent
letters in order to make it possible to proceed with the release of the IMS prescription data.

THE COURT: As you a11 know and those on the phone know, I put all of these orders on my website. So if you are interested in looking at any of them, you can just go to the website and pull one down.

MR. MEUNIER: Your Honor, Sections 2 and 3 of the joint report deal with CMOs 2, 3, and 4 and with the selection of bellwether candidates for the discovery pool.

We are pleased to report that the MDL Centrality system that you put in place for this litigation has proved to be a very useful tool in this process and that using the data and pursuant to the provisions of the CMOs, we now have a discovery pool of 40 cases selected. The parties will now proceed with merits discovery specific to those cases.

The PSC has reached out and made contact with plaintiffs' counsel for the 40 selected cases to educate them about the implications of the selection, educate them about the process set up by the Court, and to most importantly secure their cooperation going forward as the PSC works with them on those cases.

THE COURT: What we are trying to do, obviously, is select cases that can be tried that are bellwether cases that give the lawyers and the litigants an opportunity to see what juries do and how lawyers handle the various cases.

The problem in the past with selecting bellwether cases is that we didn't drill down on the numbers of cases in order to decide what's a good bellwether case. It was a little bit random. So what we are trying to do now is to pick 40 cases. Hopefully these 40 cases mimic the census of the entire litigation, and we will hear in a moment from Jake Woody on the numbers.

It looks like we have cases from every state in the union now, 4,000 or 5,000 cases. We are not going to be able to discover 4,000 or 5,000 cases. So what we are trying to do is select a representative number of those cases, 40 cases, and then the parties can drill down on those 40 cases, find out more about those 40 cases, and then make an intelligent selection of a bellwether that represents litigation and things of that sort. That's the aspect of the case we are in now.

MR. MEUNIER: Section 4 of the joint report, Judge, addresses counsel contact information forms. That system seems to be working pursuant to your PTO 4A, and we appreciate counsel keeping co-liaison for plaintiffs updated on their contact information.

Sections 5 and 6 of the joint report deal with plaintiff and defendant fact sheets. Before we hear from Jake Woody on his data report with respect to those fact sheets, let me just mention the process that we have put in place, with the
cooperation of opposing counse1, regarding late and allegedly deficient plaintiff fact sheets.

The system basically allows the PSC to be notified of the cases as to which the defendants believe there is lateness or deficiency. We are then given an opportunity to reach out to the plaintiff attorneys in those cases and try to work out or cure whatever problems we can cure with regard to the issues raised.

In the event that we are not successful, the names are then placed by the defendant group on a motion and order to show cause for the dismissal of those cases. Realizing how serious that is for the plaintiffs, we obviously rely upon appropriate due process notice safeguards to be in place before Your Honor hears any motion for the dismissal with prejudice.

THE COURT: I again reinforce the fact that it's important that the plaintiffs fill in the fact sheets, just as it's important that the defendants fill in the fact sheets. In cases of this sort, we try to do it as quickly as possible, so we don't use interrogatories. We use fact sheets in place of interrogatories so that the parties have an opportunity to decide what information they need and then prepare a fact sheet to obtain that information. If the parties can't agree, then I weigh in on it. The fact sheets for the plaintiff, fact sheets for the defendant are sent out, and I expect them to come back.

If the plaintiffs don't fill in the fact sheets, then their case is liable to be dismissed. So it's a significant thing.

With regard to the fact sheets, Jake, why don't you come in at this point and give us some statistics, how many you have, and that sort of thing.

MR. WOODY: Certainly, Your Honor. It's Jake Woody from BrownGreer in Richmond, Virginia. I do have just a brief report on MDL Centrality and the fact sheet process.

We have 310 firms registered with MDL Centrality at this point and over 1,000 individual users in the system. To date we have received 3,468 plaintiff fact sheets, and according to the Court's records there are 4,163 separate cases. So we do expect to continue to receive fact sheets into the future.

Along with those fact sheets, we have received over 53,000 separate documents: medical records, HIPAA authorizations, things of that nature. We are receiving about 500 fact sheets a month. That's our average. It's been the average over the last six months.

The defendants themselves have uploaded 2,733 defendant fact sheets and have issued 2,405 deficiency notices that will form, I think, the backbone of what Jerry was talking about a few minutes ago.

We worked with the parties to comply with CMO 4 to select the bellwether cases. That process went very
smoothly. We are happy to report that it was, I think, a good improvement on the bellwether system in MDLs.

We do receive on a regular basis inquiries from new firms and new people as to how to use the system and how to register. If anyone on the phone or in the courthouse has any questions about MDL Centrality or needs help, the best way to get ahold of us is to e-mail us at
MDLCentrality@BrownGreer.com. We do have people who monitor that inbox and can respond to any questions that come in very quickly.

So that's my brief monthly report, Your Honor. If there are any questions, I'm happy to answer.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.
Let's move to the next one.
MR. MEUNIER: Your Honor, the next section of the report, Section 7, deals with bundled complaints and responsive pleadings.

Your Honor has authorized the use of an exemplar joint complaint and then short form complaints for specific information on claims. An issue did arise with respect to the proper citizenship of one of the Bayer entities. The PSC, therefore, has made a correction to reflect that change by providing an updated template for a joint complaint to be posted on the Court's website.

Otherwise, what I would mention in this section,

Your Honor, is that there are subject matter jurisdictional questions that we know exist with respect to certain federally filed cases as to which there may not be complete diversity of citizenship. Knowing that, the PSC is simply concerned that we bring to the surface sooner rather than later those jurisdictional issues and challenges so that both sides don't invest a lot of time and resources and money in pursuing cases that are always going to be subject to dismissal on a lack of diversity basis. So I think we are going to be in discussion with opposing counse1 about the proper way to expedite the raising of the jurisdictional issues as to cases which are now pending as to which case that there is a diversity question.

THE COURT: Okay. Also, with the exemplar pleadings, I remind the lawyers who represent these individuals you have to analyze your particular case. If you use an exemplar pleading, be conscious of the fact that it is an exemplar pleading. Some of it may not fit your particular case.

The fact that it's an exemplar pleading doesn't get you over the jurisdictional problem or hurdle. You have to analyze your case as to whether or not this exemplar pleading fits your case. If it doesn't, then don't use it. If it does, you're welcome to at least look at it and think about using it. It's your responsibility to make that initial decision.

MR. MEUNIER: Thank you, Judge.
With respect to Section 8, preservation order, I
just wanted to simply call to the attention of plaintiffs' counse1 the provisions of PTO 15B, just as I'm sure the defendants have reminded the appropriate people on their side. There is an alternative set forth in that with respect to voicemails, IM or instant messaging, and text imaging, which is that you either refrain from any further use of those means to discuss the issues in this case or, if you don't refrain, that you must preserve under the provisions of 15B.

The next section, Your Honor, deals with the pending motion by the defendants regarding contact with physicians on the part of plaintiffs' counsel. This matter has been the subject of some briefing discussions, and the parties have agreed to some briefing deadlines which are set forth in the joint report.

We will submit a formal order for the Court to enter, with the Court's agreement, to solidify those dates, but plaintiffs' response to the pending motion is now due February 1 and defendants' reply will be February 10. The matter will be orally argued before Your Honor following the status conference on February 23.

As to discovery which is covered in Section 10, Judge, you continue to have with us biweekly discovery conferences. We find the scheduling as well as the conduct of those conferences to be extremely helpful, keeping us focused on matters that we can try to work out without your help or, if
necessary, bring to your attention.
THE COURT: What we have tried to do is that every two weeks I meet with the parties telephonically, and we discuss any discovery issues at that point and make a decision at that time so that we can move on. Oftentimes with these cases, if you take discovery issues under advisement, everything stops. The train just stops.

I want to meet with them every two weeks. Sometimes we won't have much to discuss. Sometimes knowing that we have something to discuss precipitates some discussion between and among the parties, but I think it moves it faster this way. I have given them another series of dates that I will be meeting with them.

MR. MEUNIER: Your Honor, this section of the report on discovery also references privilege logs. The parties continue to have meet-and-confer discussions about that issue and are hopeful of resolving any and all differences on privilege logs.

We also mention in this section the noticing of defendant employee depositions. The first of those is to take place in New Jersey on February 10. I'm pleased to report that there were some differences between the parties that were worked out with respect to the logistics and the dates and locations of those depositions. We appreciate counsel's efforts in resolving those issues without need for the Court to
become involved.
THE COURT: As I understand it, the plaintiffs have agreed not to subpoena the individual employees at their home but to tel1 the defendant counsel so that they can make arrangements to have the people there.

MR. MEUNIER: Correct, Your Honor. Yes. We only regarded that to be a necessity when we did not have agreement, but we now have agreement.

Finally, Judge, in the discovery section we reference the third request for production of documents that the PSC has propounded to the defendants. Following the defendants' response, we felt it necessary to file a motion to compe1. That motion is now filed and set for oral argument by telephone with Your Honor on February 3 at 3:30 p.m. We do not yet have the defendants' opposition brief, but under the local rules I think there's agreement that the defendants' memo in opposition will be filed no later than January 26 , which is next Tuesday, I believe.

The next section of the report, Section 11, deals with deposition protocol and guidelines. The parties have, I think, worked diligently to resolve a number of issues concerning the deposition protocol in this case. Of course, as I mentioned, we have the first deposition taking place February 10, so we know there's a time urgency in resolving these problems.

We have been able to resolve a number of problems, but some remain unresolved. As we told the Court in chambers this morning, our hope is to continue to work on resolving a lot of those issues. We know today, though, that there are certain issues which will require oral argument before the Court today. So following the conference, on those issues as to which we do not expect to be able to make an agreement, Your Honor will hear oral argument from both sides.

As to the remaining issues, where we think there is still the chance of working matters out, we will continue to work with opposing counse1. We would ask the Court to allow us on the February 3 telephone hearing on the motion to compe1, to add some additional time after that for oral argument on whatever we can't work out with respect to the deposition protocol.

Your Honor, third-party discovery is essentially continuing as a process with respect to both the FDA and the Duke Clinical Research Institute. With respect to Duke, as Mr. Davis reported to you earlier in chambers, the effort has been to streamline the production of documents. We have discussed search term narrowing for that purpose, and we are hopeful that Duke will continue to work with us and we will have a complete return on what we need from that source.

The next section is state/federal coordination, and Ms. Barrios is here to report on that.

MS. BARRIOS: Thank you, Mr. Meunier.
Good morning, Your Honor. Dawn Barrios for the federal/state committee.

Based upon the information that the defendants kindly send to me every month, I have prepared a state court status chart I have provided to the parties and to your law clerk.

Just as the numbers of the cases continue to mount in the MDL, we have substantial changes in the state courts. If Your Honor would look at the last page, we have a total.

There are 572 cases filed outside of the MDL, but 527 of them are filed in Pennsylvania. Since the last status conference, there have been 37 additional cases filed around the country. In those 37 cases, there are 41 actual Xarelto users. I would like to count those users as the plaintiffs instead of the number of cases.

Your Honor, both co-lead counsel from Pennsylvania are here in case you have a question, Mr. Gallucci and Mr. Weinkowitz. They report to me that everything is going smoothly and there's no trial date set. If you have any questions, they are happy to answer them.

THE COURT: No. I just want to express my appreciation for them coming.

I think it's very helpful for you all. If you
need anything from the MDL, I will make sure you get it. So keep in touch and participate in it. Whatever suggestions or information you have, I'm very responsive to it so that we can coordinate this matter. I think it's for everybody's benefit, and particularly the benefit of the claimants and to the defendants also.

MS. BARRIOS: Your Honor, I forgot to report one thing. There have been no new judges added since the last couple of conferences, so you don't have to worry about sending out your letter.

THE COURT: Okay. Fine. Anything else?
MR. MEUNIER: Your Honor, I think what remains is to set the March status conference. February 23 is the next status conference.

THE COURT: February 23 is the next one. The following one is March 16 at 2:00 p.m.

Why don't we go into the discovery motions at this point. Jim, do you have anything?

MR. IRWIN: Your Honor, I've been asked to address the personnel file issue. I don't know if you want to hear from us first. I'm glad to go first because we are the ones saying no.

MR. MEUNIER: Your Honor, we do need just a few minutes to set up.

THE COURT: Okay. Let's take a five-minute break,
then, and come back. Court will stand in recess.
THE DEPUTY CLERK: A11 rise.
(Proceedings adjourned.)

*     *         * 


## 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.

s/ Toni Doyle Tusa<br>Toni Doyle Tusa, CCR, FCRR

Official Court Reporter

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