IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: PHILIPS RECALLED CPAP,
BI-LEVEL PAP, AND MECHANICAL
VENTILATOR PRODUCTS LIABILITY
LITIGATION.

No. 21-mc-1230 MDL No. 3014

Transcript of Status Conference proceedings held on Thursday, February 29, 2024, in the United States District Court, 700 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15219, before the Honorable Joy Flowers Conti, Senior United States District Judge.

APPEARANCES:

For the Plaintiffs Sandra L. Duggan, Esq.

Kelly K. Iverson, Esq. Steven A. Schwartz, Esq. Christopher A. Seeger, Esq.

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Amanda B. Robinson, Esq.

For Other Philips Defendants:

Michael H. Steinberg, Esq. Tracy Richelle High, Esq.

For Polymer:

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

Thursday Afternoon, February 29, 2024

(In Open Court)

THE COURT: So this is the status conference in

In Re: Philips Recalled CPAP, Bi-Level PAP and Mechanical

Ventilator Products Litigation at Master Docket, Miscellaneous

No. 21-1230.

The parties who are going to be speaking have already entered their appearance. If anyone else wishes to enter their appearance, they should come forward and sign in on the tablet in front of the bench.

Going to the joint proposed agenda, I note that there is an item 4 was a motion to compel by plaintiff Derek King.

The Court expects to enter a decision shortly in that matter.

I do not believe that any oral argument is necessary.

Mr. King had requested to participate remotely in this hearing, but the Court did not permit that because I don't believe it's necessary to have oral argument. So there will be no oral argument on that or commentary and there's a decision expected shortly.

So the first thing, discovery update/status of the proceedings with the special master. Make sure you identify yourself before you speak. Thank you. That's for the benefit of the court reporter.

MS. ITRI: Good morning, Your Honor. Shauna Itri for

the plaintiffs from Seeger Weiss.

I am here to report that plaintiffs have been working on some follow-up of Philips' productions of documents. We are working through that collaboratively. I speak with Ms. McNally a lot these days.

To the extent we need some guidance, we effectively use Special Master Katz as a resource. We have fact depositions that are continuing through the spring, and we have notice of 30(b)(6) depositions, and we are also working collaboratively to schedule those topics in the spring and beyond.

MS. McNALLY: Good morning, Your Honor. Laura McNally on behalf of Philips Respironics.

Just to put some numbers around some of our document productions, to date, we have made 204 productions totaling over 2.7 million documents. Separately, we have made 37 productions of device inspection files, which is about 3.5 million additional files and documents.

So we have been, you know, busy and hard at work and, you know, I otherwise agree with my friend's description of how things are proceeding with Special Master Katz.

One item, though, that kind of focuses on the discovery from the Philips defendants. Separately, we're also engaged with the medical monitoring plaintiffs on gathering discovery from the medical monitoring plaintiffs, and, in

particular, in response to your January 25th order directing them to produce certain documents and respond to certain interrogatories, we only over just this past weekend, and I think yesterday, started to receive some documents in that regard.

So in our view, it has not been as fulsome as we would like. However, we are working closely with Special Master Katz to try to address those so that -- because we need documents before we can schedule all of these depositions which have to occur in the next two months, and we are just trying to, you know, get the documents, and that's been a challenge, but hopefully -- we hope that those documents will start rolling in a little bit quicker so that we can get those depositions scheduled.

I don't know if plaintiffs' counsel has anything to add to that.

MS. POLLOCK-AVERY: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Elizabeth Pollock-Avery for the plaintiffs.

Ms. McNally is correct. We did just begin to produce the medical records. We had a production on Saturday of this week. We also had a production yesterday and there will be another production tomorrow.

We -- as soon as the order came down, we have diligently been working with our plaintiffs to collect all of their medical information, but pursuant to the terms of the

order, the special master's two-step process, we do need time to review the records prior to producing them.

So we do anticipate a more fulsome production and the rolling production to continue going on forward and looking at probably two productions per week at a minimum going forward.

And I'm happy to answer any questions the Court may have.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. Thank you all.

MS. POLLOCK-AVERY: Your Honor, just as an update on plaintiff's production, we have produced over 85,000 documents and over 600,000 pages of documents so far.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MS. POLLOCK-AVERY: Thank you.

THE COURT: Next is an update on the proceedings with Special Master Vanaskie. Who would like to come forward? I just want to give you my brief assessment.

I found the matters we are dealing with, the medical monitoring, to be somewhat confusing, and so that's why I sent it back, and I gave some guidance going forward with respect to those matters.

The special master is only responding to what you all have provided the special master, and I'm looking at what I need to move the case forward, and so I need to have a clear roadmap -- what's in, what's out -- at least the motions to dismiss stage.

Now, these are intertwined, and I have to say until

last month when we had the argument, I didn't quite appreciate what exactly was happening with the medical monitoring versus the personal injury. I did resolve some of the personal injury matters as part of the motion to dismiss process.

So if something was dismissed or recognized as a claim, if it was dismissed with prejudice, if it is dismissed without prejudice but it's not being re-raised in the new briefing, then if that particular claim is being asserted in medical monitoring, it would go away the same.

I think I made that clear in one of the footnotes where I talked about if something was subsumed -- like a lot of times the traditional tort actions are subsumed into statutory actions and so you don't have those claims. They are just available in terms of relief through a statutory products liability claim.

So don't re-invent matters that don't have to be re-invented for the special master in the medical monitoring.

The medical monitoring, as I got through it, I understood that it's really a question of for each state, if you are looking at the state laws, what claims would survive where there's a question -- and it's only on the question of injury or harm. That's what you are really looking at for tort purposes and also for some of the statutory ones. Some don't require a showing of harm, and so those are clear, and, you know, so those will move forward, but it has to be clear.

So for the other ones that are really in dispute, we're looking at how would that state approach it. I gave you the benefit of my thoughts on what the role of the district court is when the highest court in the state has not spoken. So you'll be able to argue that in your briefing with the special master.

But at the end of the day, I need a roadmap. Okay? We have 41 states, if that's the number of states. And here are -- here's Count 1, which is whatever it is, and these are the states that have this type of claim, and they do have -- they recognize the harm or they don't, depending on -- my understanding is these plaintiffs in the medical monitoring master complaint only have a subcellular injury or some kind of injury to the DNA that has not manifested into a physical injury, and so that's what we're looking at, and that's all that we're looking at, and those plaintiffs are not plaintiffs in the personal injury case claim master complaint because those plaintiffs are alleging manifest personal injuries, and that's the distinction between the two master complaints.

MS. DYKSTRA: Lisa Dykstra from Philips RS North America.

Yes, thank you, Your Honor, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We did meet with Judge Vanaskie on the 26th, and we set a briefing schedule out so that we could go and assess line-by-line, state-by-state what the relevant

provisions are in each state and address that per your court's order.

The briefing schedule was laid out in his order. So April 10th is our brief due on the defendant's side, plaintiffs have 45 days to respond, and then we will reply 15 days following that, and we will make sure to address state-by-state what the rules, regulations and statutes require so that it's easy for Your Honor to figure out each of the different obligations and statutory requirements.

THE COURT: Exactly. I think it will be -- it's going to help us all going forward as we get ready for the discovery and then also for any summary judgments, dispositive motions that might be coming up.

So, and the special master did make clear that these are firm deadlines, no extensions.

MS. DYKSTRA: Yes.

THE COURT: So work diligently toward accomplishing that, and I think it will make the process easier for the medical monitoring.

You know what the role was in the personal injury complaint. That briefing is already coming in, as I understand it.

MS. DYKSTRA: Yes.

THE COURT: Okay. Any questions about the personal injury?

MR. VERRIER: Keith Verrier for the plaintiffs, Your Honor. No, we don't have any questions. We agree with everything Ms. Dykstra said and your guidance is appreciated.

THE COURT: Thank you all.

MS. DYKSTRA: Thank you.

MR. VERRIER: Thank you.

THE COURT: The next is the judicial notice motion.

As I understand it, KPNV on the judicial notice in the reply came back and said that they are not seeking the Court to look at any underlying facts. All they are asking for the Court to do is to note that there have been enforcement actions against non-manufacturer proceedings.

The FDA has exercised broad -- has exercised enforcement action. They are not asking for the Court to look at any -- look at it from any kind of personal jurisdiction issues. They are --

MR. STEINBERG: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: They are just alleviating the Court's concern that this would be novel, that no parent has ever been subject to an enforcement action.

MR. STEINBERG: Precisely, Your Honor. I mean our point is --

THE COURT: But it doesn't really affect the personal jurisdiction.

MR. STEINBERG: Well, it addresses an argument that

the plaintiffs have made, which was that there was no basis for KPNV to be engaging in the discussions directly with the FDA, and the way in which the plaintiffs pitched the argument is that KPNV controlled Respironics in discussions with the FDA, but our point is is KPNV had its own independent exposure to the FDA, and that's why we cited these consent decrees and complaints.

And so -- and, actually, I think the plaintiffs pretty much got our point right, which is that what we're using it for is just to show that it's not a novel claim and that I believe they said it in their papers that -- so you have citing from our conclusions of law and findings of fact, that basically the FDA has had authority to proceed against the parent of a regulated entity.

THE COURT: I'll be taking notice that these consent decrees exist.

MR. STEINBERG: Correct.

THE COURT: Period. Not the underlying facts.

MR. STEINBERG: No.

THE COURT: You can't argue that this particular parent was subject to it for these reasons -- we're not going to get into any of that.

MR. STEINBERG: No, we're not. I mean, we're not -I'm not going to ask Your Honor to try the GE case or any of
the other cases that are listed that we have asked.

THE COURT: Or find your case is similar to those or dissimilar.

MR. STEINBERG: No. It's just that, of course, regulators have many different ways of communicating with regulated parties, and one of them is through the complaint and consent decree process where they make clear what their theories are and what they believe the scope and effect of their authority is, and that's the only thing that we're presenting through this request for judicial notice.

MR. SEELEY: Thank you, Your Honor. Caleb Seeley for the plaintiffs.

We certainly agree with everything you said to start, which is that if you're not getting into the facts and circumstances, then these -- the mere existence of these documents tell you nothing about personal jurisdiction, and courts in this circuit tend to decline to take judicial notice of the relevant facts, which we think would be appropriate here.

THE COURT: I'm not taking a look for the facts. It alleviates a concern that this court had that this would be the first exposure of a parent to liability from the FDA.

MR. SEELEY: Absolutely. I think Mr. Steinberg made an important statement on the record during the October hearing on the record at pages 180 -- 98 --

THE COURT: So he's just substantiating that.

MR. SEELEY: And we think that's important, that KPNV was the responsible party in the eyes of the FDA. We do think that is indicative of their direct involvement and their control, and we certainly don't dispute that. We think it goes to personal jurisdiction.

THE COURT: I don't know about that. I mean, I would have to know -- this is where you would have to look at an expert analysis of what the FDA is doing in these circumstances with parents, and I don't know that I have a record for that.

MR. SEELEY: I think we put in a sufficient record.

I think Mr. Steinberg made a pretty important admission on the record at the hearing. We cite it in our findings of fact.

So none of this is new information, but we do think that the fact that he said that the FDA, in response to your question, that KPNV participated in these post-recog activities because the FDA required a responsible party to be present, and we think that if the parent is the responsible party, that that shows control.

It also shows their direct involvement, and, as you know, we argued that they are both bases for jurisdiction exist in this case.

THE COURT: But what the FDA considers a responsible party may not be equal to the personal jurisdiction. That's why -- I mean, what does the FDA consider a responsible party?

Do you have anybody who has opined on that?

MR. SEELEY: Not at this point. We certainly plan to have an FDA expert down the road, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, this is the problem when we are trying to interweave an agency action with a federal court action, and I'm not certain that a responsible party is the same thing as contacts in a jurisdiction or sufficient to show alter ego.

MR. SEELEY: I think standing alone, we would certainly agree. It's one piece of evidence. I think we submitted many, many pages to you back in December listing the various facts that show the contacts between KPNV and the jurisdictions at issue in this case.

THE COURT: KPNV has acknowledged that at the point of the recall, they were involved, and they have agreed to, at least for Pennsylvania purposes, to jurisdiction here.

MR. SEELEY: That's right. They tried to limit it to Pennsylvania for the post-recall time period.

THE COURT: Whether they'll be successful in that, I don't know, for the recall.

MR. SEELEY: Yes, Your Honor.

MR. STEINBERG: Thank you.

MR. SEELEY: Thank you.

THE COURT: I will take judicial notice for the existence of the consent decree showing that the FDA has

subjected parent corporations to some enforcement activities.

But there's no need for further discovery. We're not doing anymore discovery on the personal jurisdiction. There's been ample time for any discovery that either party wanted to have. So we'll move forward from that.

Okay. I've already talked about item 4. Item 5, the motion to dismiss for failing to file PFSs. There were five of those motions that are pending. Four of those plaintiffs are represented by one firm, and then the other -- there was response in each of the five, and the other plaintiff's counsel responded that they haven't been able to get in touch with their client for those purposes.

So typically when that happens, the fifth kind of item, the plaintiff voluntarily moves to dismiss the case. So I don't know why that hasn't happened here.

As to the others, they seem to be asking that -- they are advising the court they need some further information.

And so at this stage, I just don't know why I wouldn't dismiss those complaints for failure to prosecute, but to do so without prejudice. I know Philips Respironics is seeking to have those dismissed with prejudice.

Did you want to be heard on that?

MS. DYKSTRA: Nothing further on that, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Would Philips Respironics object to the dismissal without prejudice?

MS. DYKSTRA: Lisa Dykstra. I think that they have had sufficient time to act and prosecute their claims, but we do not object to dismissal without prejudice.

THE COURT: Okay. So I'll just dismiss those five without prejudice.

MS. REICHARD: Your Honor, Joyce Reichard on behalf of plaintiffs.

I was just going to ask if, because of the individual circumstances set forth in their briefing whether a show cause order would be in line with those, but I do not object to it.

THE COURT: I said a show cause would be applicable if they didn't file a response. They each responded. So I know what their cause is going to be, and I don't think that cause is sufficient, but because the case is so complex -- we have a registry. I mean, they can go over and file on the registry if they wanted to. That's what happens with a lot of those voluntary dismissals, or if they can't find their plaintiff, they would just voluntarily dismiss the case or ask to be removed as counsel for the case, and then it's up to the individual plaintiff, and if we can't find the plaintiff, you know, then they would be just subject to a dismissal.

But I think at this stage, because the case is still ongoing, we do have a registry, a dismissal without prejudice would be appropriate, and then we can just move on.

MS. REICHARD: Sorry for my misunderstanding, Your

Honor.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. REICHARD: Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. Okay, an update on the economic loss class settlement. We have that in process.

MR. SEEGER: Yes. Chris Seeger. Good afternoon,
Your Honor.

MS. DYKSTRA: Lisa Dykstra, Your Honor.

MR. SEEGER: Yeah, I just have a very brief update.

As the Court knows, we disseminated class notice. The opt-out objection period ended on February 7th.

We are still getting some requests for exclusion coming in, and we're checking those to make sure that they comply with, you know, the order and that they were timely put in the mail, but we are taking care of all of that.

And as far as objections, we are going to deal with those in accordance with the deadlines set forth in the preliminary approval order.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. SEEGER: One of the reasons I really got up here, though, is to say to folks that we now have preservation orders that cover all of the devices.

So we would like for people to take -- people who are reviewing this transcript are paying attention, to take advantage of the preservation registry, and they can go on the

website, the settlement website for registering their device.

And in accordance with that, Philips is going to preserve those devices should they need them for something else, but they can also collect their hundred dollars and return the device. So I just wanted folks to know reviewing the transcript that that's in place.

THE COURT: Okay. And who should they call if they have questions about that? Would that be the liaison counsel?

MR. SEEGER: Yeah. I think that -- do we have -- yep, it's Aaron sitting in the back, Aaron Rihn.

THE COURT: So they should contact the liaison counsel, Mr. Aaron Rihn.

MR. SEEGER: Yes.

MS. DYKSTRA: Yes, Your Honor. I have nothing further on that. Thank you.

MR. SEEGER: Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. The update on contributions claims.

MR. KOONS: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Erik Koons for Philips RS.

At the last status conference, Your Honor, I gave you an update on this as well. Since the last conference, we have largely completed the contribution claim. We're ready to file it.

What we're doing is getting a little bit bogged down

in the process, and I just want to give you kind of an update on that.

We can, although I don't want to, file a contribution claim with respect to all 300 or however many hundred individual complaints there are, including the short form complaints.

What we're proposing to do with the parties -- and we're supposed to talk about this tomorrow -- is file a single omnibus master complaint in contribution like the master complaint process that Your Honor set forth for the rest the complaints in the MDL.

I'm hopeful that we can file that process rather than I think a far less efficient process, and we have exchanged with the parties just yesterday a draft pretrial order along the lines of what I'm proposing, and hopefully we can get that agreed to and entered expeditiously.

Because we have not really discussed substantively any concerns or objections yet that -- if exist, that the other parties may have, I may be hearing them for the first time now, but that's the process that we really, really hope to pursue.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. DUGGAN: Sandra Duggan again for the plaintiffs.

As I raised with Mr. Koons, we have a couple issues.

One is we don't know what the filing is that they anticipate

making. So it's difficult for us blindly to just enter into a pretrial order. I feel like without seeing it now, that it's a little bit chaotic in the sense -- we already have the second amended master PI complaint on file as of the 12th.

There's a briefly schedule in place for that.

The defendants are either going to answer the complaint or file a motion to dismiss. I believe that's on March 11th, and then there's a time period for us to respond.

So to now input another master complaint on top of that, I think is difficult to have the exact same schedule. I don't know how it's going to work.

THE COURT: Would the contribution claims come in for the economic loss as well?

MR. KOONS: Your Honor, the contribution claims -no, they would not. It's personal injury and I believe
that's it.

THE COURT: Just the personal injury. Well, wouldn't that come in when you file your answer, you would file some third-party complaint?

MR. KOONS: Yeah. So I don't think this is going to create any confusion. I mean, what is happening --

THE COURT: Just talk about that when you are meeting with the -- are you going to meet with Special Master Katz or just among yourselves?

MR. KOONS: If we need to. Tomorrow we are supposed

to talk among counsel if we have problems, but I do want to underscore that what is happening, currently happening in the Philips MDL should not be impacted at all by contribution.

I mean, our contribution claim is essentially saying if we are found responsible -- and we don't think we should be -- SoClean bears responsibility where the Philips MDL plaintiffs used the SoClean device. It should be neutral as to discovery. It should be neutral as to everything.

The only thing that would happen is when we file it, whether we file it as a master, or whatever we call it, or we file 300 separate complaints, whatever the number is, Your Honor, it's going to be easier obviously for us to file one rather than 300. It's also going to be easier for SoClean as far as its responses, whether it files a motion to dismiss or answers to respond to a single complaint.

THE COURT: Shouldn't SoClean be part of your discussions then?

MR. KOONS: They will be and they have been and they will continue to be, yes.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. DUGGAN: Another thing we have to take into consideration, Your Honor, is that, you know, the long contribution varies from state to state greatly, and we have the short form complaints in place, and it was just a question of how is this all going to work in terms of the timing, and I

think that's something we really haven't considered yet.

THE COURT: Okay. So I'll leave it to you to have your robust discussions.

MR. KOONS: That will be fine. I look forward to it, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MS. DUGGAN: Thank you.

THE COURT: So the census registry.

MS. DYKSTRA: Thank you, Your Honor. Lisa Dykstra.

As of the 27th of this past month, there are 57,168 potential claimants registered on the census registry.

MS. REICHARD: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Joyce Reichard for plaintiffs.

Just as another update, that's approximately 125 more than last month.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. REICHARD: Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. Okay. Leadership development.

MS. KREIDER: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Claire
Kreider from Gainsburgh, Benjamin on behalf of plaintiffs and
the leadership development committee, and besides myself, you
have a lot of my committee in your courtroom today that are
from out of state, and, yeah, because we met with lead counsel
and most the attorneys that have presented before Your Honor

yesterday. So all in town.

We are happy to report that there has been an uptick in the meaningful work opportunities provided to our committee since the beginning of the year, and we are continuing to actively engage in all aspects of the litigation, which is good.

Many of our members are helping prepare and attend depositions. Attorneys in the co-leads firm have begun a biweekly meeting, and they help coordinate members of our committees covering those depositions and getting to attend those depositions.

I personally have had a couple opportunities to participate in legal briefing. I was able to draft a letter briefing to Special Master Katz about a few outstanding plaintiff fact sheet deficiencies.

I was also able to work on the second amended master personal injury complaint, too, and work on claims related to the state specific product liability acts, and then as of late, I have been very busy working on discovery responses, gathering discovery responses from those medical monitoring class reps according to Your Honor's recent order. So that's been keeping me very busy as of late. Our team is working diligently to get those responses and coordinate with all of the class reps and get prepared. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you all for coming in,

too.

MS. HALL: Good morning, Your Honor. Emma Hall. I represent defendant Philips Respironics.

I'm here today to talk a little bit about my role in managing the document review and production for defendants.

We have been coordinating between the vendor, first and second level review team, client, and the various firm case teams across the different firms.

We have been training their review teams and responding in realtime to questions that come up to give guidance on document coding and redaction. This also involves making sure that our calls on coding and redaction are consistent across sort of this massive volume of documents that are all being reviewed by different team members and are often duplicative reiterations of similar documents.

We have had weekly calls to resolve and coordinate on workflow issues and any questions that come up with documents, and we have assigned review batches across the firm teams.

Over 500,000 different documents have been batched out over the course of the production so far. And, yeah, I think that's the summary of my work as the document review managing associate. So thanks for having me.

THE COURT: It's a lot of work for you I understand.

MS. HALL: I'm everyone's favorite person to see in their inbox giving them more document review work.

Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. STEINBERG: Your Honor, for Sullivan and Cromwell, we have two new members to the team who have joined me here in court today. I just wanted to introduce them to the Court.

I have Alexandra Bodo and Shane Palmer. No reports from them today, but I'm sure they'll come forward in the future. But thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you. At some point -- it's not a requirement by any means, but we're all grappling with the use of Generative AI, and I know, you know, that there are a lot of models that are coming available to lawyers in the legal field, and at some point it just would be interesting to know if the lawyers have found it helpful.

There's no order in our court requiring somebody to certify you are not using it. I understand lawyers do use Generative AI. Of course, it doesn't substitute for an independent analysis, but it would just be helpful to know at some point if it's being used, if the parties find it helpful, because the courts are not using any Generative AI yet, but at some point if it's a tool that is being found useful, I'm sure it's something we would consider for the court, but there's no response needed today, but it's just a query the Court has for me to try to understand what's going on in the profession in terms of how it's actually being used, particularly in large

data cases like this where it seems like it would be helpful.

Okay. Anything else to come before the Court? Well, I'll either see you by Zoom or in person in two weeks. Thank you.

THE CLERK: All rise. Court is adjourned.

(The hearing concluded)

CERTIFICATE

I, VERONICA R. TRETTEL, RMR, CRR, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the above-entitled case.

\s\ Veronica R. Trettel \text{Veronica R. Trettel} \text{U3/U2/2U24} \text{VERONICA R. TRETTEL, RMR, CRR} \text{Date of Certification} Official Court Reporter

03/02/2024