

**MINUTE ENTRY  
FALLON, J.  
OCTOBER 25, 2013**

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**

**IN RE: VIOXX  
PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION**

MDL NO. 1657

SECTION L

JUDGE FALLON  
MAG. JUDGE KNOWLES

**THIS DOCUMENT RELATES TO ALL CASES**

A monthly status conference was held on this date in the Courtroom of Judge Eldon E. Fallon. The Court first met with members of the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee ("PSC"), the Defendants' Steering Committee ("DSC"), and counsel for James Ratliff and others similarly situated to discuss agenda items for the conference. At the conference, counsel reported to the Court on the topics set forth in Joint Report No. 78 of Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel and Defendants' Liaison Counsel. This monthly status conference was transcribed by Toni Tusa, official Court reporter. Counsel may contact Ms. Tusa at (504) 523-7778 to request a copy of the transcript. A summary of the monthly status conference follows.

**I. CLASS ACTIONS**

The only remaining, pending class actions involve Purchase Claims<sup>1</sup> and Consumer Claims. On June 30, 2010, Merck filed its Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings or to Strike the Class Allegations in Purchase Claims Master Complaint (Rec. Doc. 46086). The motion has been

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<sup>1</sup> Counsel in *Deckowitz v. Merck*, 05-2102, has noted that the complaint in that action contains not only purchaser claims, but also securities claims brought on behalf of owners of Merck stock.

fully briefed, and the Court has heard oral argument and taken the matter under submission. Both plaintiffs and Merck have filed notices of supplemental authority with the Court (Rec. Docs. 63966, 63993, 64022).

On July 17, 2013, plaintiffs filed a Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Settlement of the pending economic loss claims (consumer claims) (Rec. Doc. 64487). Merck filed a Statement in Support of Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Settlement (Rec. Doc. 64488). By Order entered July 18, 2013, the Court scheduled the motion for hearing on July 24, 2013, and set briefing deadlines (Rec. Doc. 64491). James Ratliff filed an objection to the motion (Rec. Doc. 64289), and the PSC and Merck filed responses (Rec. Docs. 64497, 64500). The motion was heard on July 24, 2013. Following the hearing, the Court entered an Order indicating its intent to preliminarily approve the settlement and instructing counsel to confer regarding date issues (Rec. Doc. 64511). On July 26, 2013, Ratliff filed proposed changes to the proposed class notice (Rec. Doc. 64513). On August 1, 2013, the PSC and Merck filed responses in opposition (Rec. Docs. 64518, 64519). Also on August 1, 2013, Ratliff filed motions to intervene and to stay dissemination of notice and modify dates contained in the proposed class notice (Rec. Docs. 64520, 64521). On August 2, 2013, the PSC and Merck filed oppositions to Ratliff's motions to intervene and to stay (Rec. Docs. 64522-24, 64523, 64524). By Orders entered August 2, 2013, (Rec. Docs. 64525, 64526), the Court denied Ratliff's motions and granted preliminary approval to the Class with an authorized notice plan. On August 12, 2013, Class Counsel filed a Motion for an Order Enjoining James Ratliff, His Counsel and Any Other Class Member from Prosecuting a Competing and Overlapping Consumer Class Action and Interfering with this Court's Continuing Jurisdiction Over This Litigation and the Nationwide Vioxx Consumer Class Settlement Preliminarily Approved by This Court (Rec. Doc.

64539), along with a Motion for Expedited Hearing (Rec. Doc. 64542). On August 12, 2013, Merck filed a Motion to Stay Vioxx-Related Consumer-Protection Claims in Kentucky State Court and Enjoin Further Prosecution of Such Claims (Rec. Doc. 64537). On August 13, 2013, Ratliff filed a Response in Opposition to Co-Lead Settlement Counsel's Motion for Expedited Hearing (Rec. Doc. 64542). On August 30, 2013, Ratliff filed a Notice of Appeal to the Fifth Circuit United States Court of Appeals (Rec. Doc. 64569) and a Motion to Stay Pending Appeal (Rec. Doc. 64570) (*see infra* Part.VI). On September 3, 2013, Ratliff filed a Combined Response in Opposition to Motion to Stay Vioxx-Related Consumer-Protection Claims in Kentucky State Court and Enjoin Further Prosecution of Such Claims and Response in Opposition to Motion for Order Enjoining James Ratliff, His Counsel and Any Other Class Member from Prosecuting a Competing and Overlapping Consumer Class Action and Interfering with this Court's Continuing Jurisdiction Over This Litigation and the Nationwide Vioxx Consumer Class Settlement Preliminarily Approved by this Court (Rec. Doc. 64572). On September 4, 2013, Ratliff filed an Amended Motion to Stay Pending Appeal (Rec. Doc. 64576). On September 8, 2013, Merck filed a Reply in Support of Motion to Stay Vioxx-Related Consumer-Protection Claims in Kentucky State Court and Enjoin Further Prosecution of Such Claims (Rec. Doc. 64579) and Class Counsel filed a Reply in Support of Motion to Enjoin Interference With the Vioxx Consumer Class Settlement Approval Process (Rec. Doc. 64580). On September 11, 2013, a hearing was conducted on Merck's Motion to Stay Vioxx-Related Consumer-Protection Claims in Kentucky State Court and Enjoin Further Prosecution of Such Claims (Rec. Doc. 64537) and Class Counsel's Motion for an Order Enjoining James Ratliff, His Counsel and Any Other Class Member from Prosecuting a Competing and Overlapping Consumer Class Action and Interfering with this Court's Continuing Jurisdiction Over This Litigation and the Nationwide Vioxx

Consumer Class Settlement Preliminarily Approved by This Court (Rec. Doc. 64539), and the matters were taken under submission (*see* Rec. Doc. 64593). A telephone status conference was held on September 18, 2013. (*See* Rec. Doc. 64607). On September 27, 2013, Ratliff filed a Reply in Support of Motion to Stay Pending Appeal (Rec. Doc. 64618).

BrownGreer, the claims administrator's website concerning the settlement is now available at [www.vioxxsettlement.com](http://www.vioxxsettlement.com) for public viewing and the class notice program has commenced.

## **II. GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

On June 5, 2012, the Court entered Pre-Trial Order 39B (Rec. Doc. 63895) relating to Amendment of Pleadings, Discovery, and Remand/Transfer Scheduling Order for Remaining Government Action Cases; the time period for completion of discovery and timing of remands was extended by joint motion in Pre-Trial Order 39C (Rec. Doc. 64223) on January 17, 2013. The parties are engaged in ongoing discovery.

On December 19, 2012, the PSC and Government Action Liaison Counsel filed a Motion for an Order Imposing a Common Benefit Obligation Upon the Recovery of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Attorney General's Claims Asserted Against Merck, Sharp & Dohme Corp., in this MDL (Rec. Doc. 64205). On January 9, 2013, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania filed an Opposition (Rec. Doc. 64216). On February 25, 2013, the PSC and Government Action Liaison Counsel filed a reply, and the Court scheduled a hearing date on the motion (Rec. Docs. 64270, 64271). The motion was heard on March 20, 2013, and was taken under submission (Rec. Doc. 64309). On April 29, 2013, the Court issued Order & Reasons (Rec. Doc. 64364). On July 22, 2013, the PSC and Government Action Liaison Counsel served a First Set of Document Requests to the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as well as on counsel, Cohen, Placitella & Roth, P.C. The parties continue to meet and confer.

On April 29, 2013, Merck filed a Motion for Protective Order and Entry for Order for Production in the Utah case (Rec. Doc. 64362). The motion was noticed for submission on May 15, 2013. Plaintiff filed its response (Rec. Doc. 64393). By Order entered May 22, 2103, the Court granted the motion in part (Rec. Doc. 64417), and entered a separate Order for Production and Protective Order (Rec. Doc. 64418).

On April 29, 2013, Mississippi filed a Motion for Protective Order (Rec. Doc. 64365). The motion was noticed for submission on June 12, 2013. On May 3, 2013, Merck filed Motions for Judgment on the Pleadings in the Alaska, Mississippi, Montana, and Utah actions (Rec. Docs. 64372, 64373, 64374, and 64375). Thereafter, the Utah filed a Motion to Remand and a Motion to Stay (Rec. Docs. 64382, 64383) and, on May 16, 2013, filed a Motion for Summary Judgment on Judicial Estoppel (Rec. Doc. 64399).

On May 31, 2013, Mississippi filed a Supplemental Motion to Remand (Rec. Doc. 64430). The motion is noticed for submission on October 2, 2013. Also on May 31, 2013, the Court conducted a telephonic status conference to discuss Merck's motions for judgment on the pleadings (Rec. Docs. 64372, 64373, 64374, 64375). The Court ordered that the submission dates on Merck's motions be continued, with dates to be reset following the resolution of plaintiffs' motions to remand in accordance with Pre-Trial Order 39C (Rec. Doc. 64432).

On June 5, 2013, Merck filed a Motion for Protective Order in the Alaska, Mississippi, and Montana cases (Rec. Doc. 64436). On June 24, 2013, Mississippi filed an opposition memorandum (Rec. Doc. 64460). On June 14, 2013, the Alaska and Montana filed motions for protective order (Rec. Docs. 64441, 64442). On June 21, 2013, Merck filed a memorandum in further support of its Motion to Compel 30(b)(6) Depositions, originally filed on May 17, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64407), and in opposition to the state's motions for protective order (Rec. Doc.

64457). These motions were noticed for submission on June 25, 2013, immediately following the monthly status conference. Because Merck's Motion to Compel 30(b)(6) Depositions in the Alaska, Mississippi, and Montana cases (Rec. Doc. 64407) and the state's Motions for Protective Order (Rec. Docs. 64441,64442) addressed similar issues, the parties agreed to treat the state's Motions for Protective Order as oppositions to Merck's Motion to Compel. The motions were heard on June 25, 2013, immediately following the monthly status conference. By Order entered June 25, 2013, the Court granted Merck's Motion to Compel 30(b)(6) Depositions in the Alaska, Mississippi, and Montana cases (Rec. Doc. 64462). By Order entered June 28, 2013, the Court denied as moot the motions for protective order filed by Alaska, Mississippi, and Montana (Rec. Doc. 64470).

On July 17, 2013, the Government Action plaintiffs submitted expert reports. On September 6, 2013, Merck submitted its expert reports. Discovery continues in these cases.

On October 2, 2013, the Court heard the remaining Attorneys Generals' motions to remand, and Merck's opposition to the same. Pursuant to prior discussions with the Court and obligations under PRE-TRIAL ORDER 39C, there will be no ruling issued by the Court until all fact and expert discovery contemplated by PRE-TRIAL ORDER 39C is completed while the Attorneys Generals' cases are in the MDL. The parties will keep the Court apprised of the status of the remaining discovery on a routine basis. They indicated to the Court that they expect this to be complete by the end of January, 2014. The following are currently scheduled: Lisa Rarick – October 29; Robert Gibbons – November 1; 30(b)(6) Deposition of Merck – November 4 (Philadelphia, PA); Douglas Vaughan – November 8; David Sales – November 12; Nicholas Flavahan – November 14; Lawrence Brent – November 15; 30(b)(6) Deposition of Merck – November 15 (Jackson, MS).

The Attorneys General are working with Merck in finalizing their remaining experts depositions in the next few weeks: David Egilman, Paul Aisen, Nicholas Blavatsky (MT only), Richard deShazo (MS only), Clement Elswirth (MS only), Richard Gremillion (UT only), Mario Lanza (AK only), Declan Nolan (AK only), and Vonda Reeves-Darby (MS only).

### **III. THIRD PARTY PAYORS**

On August 17, 2011, the Court issued Pre-Trial Order 57 (Rec. Doc. 63267), which establishes procedures and deadlines for private third party payor common benefit fees. On November 17, 2011, the Fee Allocation Committee filed its recommendation pursuant to Pre-Trial Order 57 (Rec. Doc. 63555). The recommendation was supplemented on November 28, 2011 (Rec. Doc. 63582). On June 13, 2012, the TPP Fee Allocation Committee filed its final Recommendation (Rec. Doc. 63928). On August 10, 2012, Eric H. Weinberg filed an Objection (Rec. Doc. 64044) and a Joint Objection of Audet & Partners, LLP; Hovde Dassow & Deets, LLC; The Lanier Law Firm, P.C.; Ewing, McMillin & Willis, PLLC; and Gary Franke Co., LPA, was filed (Rec. Doc. 64046). On February 1, 2013, the TPP Fee Allocation Committee filed a Response to General Statements made by the Weinberg Objectors (Rec. Docs. 64235, 64238). On February 7, 2013, the Weinberg Objectors filed a Reply to the TPP FAC's Response (Rec. Docs. 64242, 64246). On February 12, 2013, W. Mark Lanier of The Lanier Law Firm, P.C. forwarded correspondence to Judge Fallon withdrawing its objection. On February 14, 2013, Robert T. Dassow forwarded correspondence to Judge Fallon withdrawing the objections of Hovde Dassow & Deets, LLC.; Ewing, McMillin & Willis, PLLC; and Gary Franke Co., LPA, but requesting additional review of their proposed allocations. The parties discussed these matters further at the February 26, 2013, status conference. Thereafter, the Court appointed Patrick A. Juneau to serve as Special Master under the terms of Section 4.1.6 of the TTP Common Benefit Attorneys Fee agreement (Rec. Doc. 64304). On May 15, 2013, Eric Weinberg

filed a Memorandum for the Special Master Regarding Allocation of TPP Common Benefits (Rec. Doc. 64396); the Central States Law Firms filed a Memorandum and Joint Objection to the TPP Fee Allocation Committee's Recommendation (Rec. Doc. 64397); and the TPP Fee Allocation Committee filed its Pre-Trial Memorandum (Rec. Doc. 64398). On May 17, 2013, Eric Weinberg filed a Witness List (Rec. Doc. 64406); the TPP Fee Allocation Committee filed a Witness List (Rec. Doc. 64405); and the TPP Fee Allocation Committee filed a Supplemental Witness List (Rec. Doc. 64408). On May 28, 2013, Eric Weinberg filed a Reply to Memorandum by the TPP FAC (Rec. Doc. 64422); and the TPP FAC filed a Reply to Eric Weinberg's Memorandum for the Special Master Regarding Allocation of TPP Common Benefit Fees (Rec. Doc. 64424). A Revised Scheduling Protocol for Third Party Payor Common Benefit Fees (Rec. Doc. 64439) was filed on June 10, 2013, setting a hearing before the Special Master on June 20, 2013, at 9:00 a.m. at Courtroom C468 at the Federal Courthouse in New Orleans, Louisiana. On June 19, 2013, the TPP FAC filed a Motion for Contempt, or Alternatively to Strike against the Law Offices of Eric Weinberg (Rec. Doc. 64448) and the Law Offices of Eric Weinberg filed an Opposition (Rec. Doc. 64452). On June 19, 2013, the Court issued an Order granting the motion in part and directing that the Law Office of Eric Weinberg produce the subpoenaed documents at the hearing before the Special Master on June 20, 2013. The Special Master conducted his hearing on June 20, 2013. On June 20, 2013, the TPP FAC filed a Motion to Set Hearing to Find the Law Firm of Eric Weinberg in Contempt, or Alternatively to Strike (Rec. Doc. 64454). By Order entered June 21, 2013, the Court ordered Eric Weinberg to show cause on July 1, 2013, why he should not be held in contempt and set briefing deadlines (Rec. Doc. 64459). On June 27, 2013, Mr. Weinberg filed an opposition to the show cause order (Rec. Doc. 64466) and filed a motion for reconsideration of the Court's prior orders (Rec. Doc. 64467). The PSC filed a



response to Mr. Weinberg's motion (Rec. Doc. 64471). The motion for contempt was heard and denied by the Court on July 1, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64474).

#### **IV. PENDING PERSONAL INJURY CASES SUBJECT TO PTOS 28, 29 AND 43**

##### **A. General Matters Relating to Remaining Personal Injury Cases & Pending Motions**

On April 25, 2012, the Court issued its Order & Reasons addressing the PSC's Motion to Amend Pre-Trial Order 19 (Rec. Doc. 63585) and Ms. Oldfather's Motion for Order Requiring Escrow and Disclosures of Common Benefit Fee and Cost Withholdings from Settlement of Ineligible and Non-Enrolled Cases (Rec. Doc. 63154). The Order required certain further steps by the PSC and directed the parties to meet and confer, after which Ms. Oldfather's Motion could be revisited if appropriate. On September 11, 2013, the PSC filed Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel's Motion for Award of Plaintiffs' Common Benefit Reimbursement of Expenses (Rec. Doc. 64588). The PSC sought reimbursement to members of the PSC for assessments (totaling \$360,000), for assessments to members of the Fee Allocation Committee (totaling \$40,000), for invoices submitted by Special Master Juneau (totaling \$80,431.46), for certain other expenses incurred by Liaison Counsel (totaling \$14,944.60) and for an advance of \$200,000 for ongoing Common Benefit Shared Expenses. The Court granted the motion, and entered Pre-Trial Order 51(A). On October 9, 2013, Ms. Oldfather requested updated information from the PSC regarding available common benefit funds, and requested updated information from Merck on withholdings in settled cases. Those requests are pending. The parties will be prepared to discuss this further at the October 25, 2013, status conference.

On December 24, 2012, the VTE plaintiffs filed a Motion to Preclude Testimony of Mark A. Crowther, M.D., and the Testimony of John P. Kress, M.D. (Rec. Doc. 64210), and Merck filed a Consolidated Motion to Exclude Opinion Testimony on General Causation and Renewed

Motion for Summary Judgment in VTE Cases (Rec. Doc. 64211).<sup>2</sup> On January 31, 2013, opposition memoranda were filed by the VTE plaintiffs (Rec. Doc. 64232) and Merck (Rec. Doc. 64234). On February 15, 2013, reply memoranda were filed by the VTE plaintiffs (Rec. Doc. 62450) and Merck (Rec. Doc. 64233). On January 31, 2013, the VTE plaintiffs also filed a Motion for Continued Remand of Merck's Renewed Motion for Summary Judgment in VTE Cases (Rec. Doc. 64233). Merck filed an opposition to that motion on February 22, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64263). The matters were heard by the Court on March 8, 2013, and were taken under submission. By Order and Reasons entered April 9, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64341), the Court denied Merck's motion to exclude (Rec. Doc. 64211) and continued the submission date on Merck's motion for summary judgment with dates to be reset; the Court denied plaintiffs' motion to exclude (Rec. Doc. 64210); and the Court granted plaintiff's motion (Rec. Doc. 64233) to continue the submission date of Merck's motion for summary judgment. On June 3, 2013, Merck filed a Motion for Reconsideration of the Court's April 9, 2013, Order and Reasons (Rec. Doc. 64435). On July 16, 2013, the VTE plaintiffs filed an opposition memorandum (Rec. Doc. 64483). Merck filed a reply on August 6, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64528). On August 26, 2013, the VTE plaintiffs filed a sur-reply in opposition (Rec. Doc. 64558); Merck filed a response to the sur-reply on September 6, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64577). The motion is submitted to the court for a ruling.

Following the April 23, 2013, status conference, the Court and counsel for Merck and Liaison/Lead Counsel for Ineligible or Non-Enrolled Cases and Certain Other Remaining PI Claims met to informally discuss management of the VTE cases.

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<sup>2</sup> Merck had previously filed Merck filed a Motion for Summary Judgment in VTE Cases (Rec. Doc. 63539).

**B. Matters Noticed for Submission on October 25, 2013**

There were no matters noticed for submission on this date.

**C. Other Motions Involving Remaining Personal Injury Cases**

On July 25, 2013, Merck filed a Motion for Summary Judgment in the Dennis Harrison case (Rec. Doc. 64510). Although the motion was originally submitted under seal, it was unsealed at plaintiff's request (Rec. Doc. 64509). The motion was noticed for submission on September 18, 2013. On August 20, 2013, the Court entered an Order scheduling a telephone status conference in the case for August 23, 2013 (Rec. Doc. 64548). Following the telephone status conference, the Court entered an Order extending Mr. Harrison's response time through September 23, 2103 (Rec. Doc. 64556). By Order entered September 9, 2013, the Court denied Mr. Harrison's request for additional time (Rec. Doc. 64585). On September 10, 2103, Mr. Harrison filed a motion to amend complaint (Rec. Doc. 64598). Merck opposed the motion (Rec. Doc. 64599). The parties await a ruling on the motion. Following a further request for extension, the Court entered an Order extending the deadline for responding to Merck's motion for summary judgment until October 4, 2013 (Rec. Doc. 64611). On October 8, 2013, Mr. Harrison submitted a pleading entitled Plaintiff's Motion in Opposition to Defendant's Motion for Summary Judgment – The Moving Party Must Follow the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure for Summary Judgment, Rule 56, and Merck has Failed to Do So and well as a proposed Order (Rec. Doc. 64641), submitted another opposition to Merck's motion for summary judgment (Rec. Doc. 64640), and submitted a cross-motion for summary judgment (Rec. Doc. 64639). Mr. Harrison subsequently advised that these submissions were not complete. His complete submissions were sent via overnight delivery to the Court on October 22, 2013, and were accompanied by an e-mail advising the Court that his filings were now complete and ready for decision. Merck intends

to file a reply in support of its motion for summary judgment and to file an opposition to Mr. Harrison's cross-motion.

On July 29, 2013, Merck filed a Motion for Summary Judgment in the Mannino case (Rec. Doc. 64514). The motion was noticed for submission on September 4, 2013. On October 3, 2013, more than two months after Merck's motion, and more than three months after her deadline to designate experts, Ms. Mannino sent an e-mail to the Court opposing Merck's motion (Rec. Docs. 64629, 64630). On October 7, 2013, Merck filed a reply in support of its motion for summary judgment (Rec. Doc. 63631).

On October 18, 2013, Merck filed a motion for clarification of expert deadlines in the Jo Levitt case (Rec. Doc. 64643). The motion is noticed for submission on November 20, 2013.

#### **V. OTHER PENDING MOTIONS AND MATTERS**

On September 15, 2011, Ms. Oldfather filed a Motion and Supporting Memorandum to Require Court Approval of Liaison Counsel's Fee of Michael A. Stratton (Rec. Doc. 63389). That matter was argued on September 21, 2011. No response had been filed by Mr. Stratton. On June 6, 2012, the Court entered an Order (Rec. Doc. 63900) adding this matter to the agenda of the status conference on June 14, 2012, where it was further discussed. On August 15, 2012, Mr. Stratton filed a Status Conference Memorandum Regarding the Liaison Counsel Objection Heard on September 21, 2011 (Rec. Doc. 64064).

On May 17, 2013, Merck filed under seal a Motion for Summary Judgment in the Wodowski case (Rec. Doc. 64402). Plaintiff did not file any opposition.

#### **VI. APPEALS**

Several appeals have been filed by *pro se* plaintiffs and are pending before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

On February 27, 2013, the appeal record in the Strujan case, 07-906, was transmitted to the Clerk of the Fifth Circuit (Rec. Doc. 64282). On June 25, 2013, the Fifth Circuit entered judgment dismissing the appeal as frivolous. On July 10, 2013, Ms. Strujan filed a petition for panel rehearing. Thereafter, Ms. Strujan filed a Notice of Motion for Trial De Novo and for Leave to Recreate the Brief and Exhibits which was denied by the Fifth Circuit by Order entered July 24, 2013. A judgment dismissing the case was signed by the Court on October 17, 2013, (Rec. Doc. 64642). Ms Strujan has filed a petition for review in the United States Supreme Court, which is pending.

On August 30, 2013, James Ratliff filed a Notice of Appeal to the Fifth Circuit (Rec. Doc. 64569) and a Motion to Stay Pending Appeal (Rec. Doc. 64570) relating to the case of Sherrill Herke, 09-7218. On September 9, 2013, Merck filed a Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Appellate Jurisdiction or in the Alternative for Summary Affirmance (Document No. 00512367053) in the Fifth Circuit regarding the Ratliff appeal. On September 13, 2013, Ratliff filed a Motion to Expedite Appeal (Document No. 00512373998). On September 16, 2013, Settlement Class Counsel filed a Motion to Be Added as an Appellee (Document No. 00512376015). On September 19, 2013, Merck filed a Response to Ratliff's Motion to Expedite Appeal (Document No. 00512379200). On September 23, 2013, Ratliff filed an Opposition to Merck's Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Appellate Jurisdiction or in the Alternative for Summary Affirmance (Document No. 00512382921). On September 30, 2013, Merck filed a Reply in Support of Motion to Dismiss for Lack of Appellate Jurisdiction or in the Alternative for Summary Affirmance (Document No. 00512391170). On September 30, 2013, Ratliff for a Reply in Support of Motion to Expedite Appeal (Document No. 00512391738). The parties await a ruling from the Fifth Circuit.

**VII. NEXT STATUS CONFERENCE**

The next monthly status conference will be held on **Wednesday, January 15, 2014, at 9:00 a.m.**, Central Standard Time. This conference will be held in the Courtroom of Judge Eldon E. Fallon, Room C-468. Any interested persons unable to attend in person may listen in via telephone by dialing (877) 336-1839. The participant access code is 4227405, and the security code is 011513.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'E' followed by a vertical line and a horizontal line extending to the right.