Phone: 702/869-0800 Fax: 702/869-0900

1980 Festival Plaza Drive, Ste. 270 Las Vegas, Nevada 89135

The Gage Law Firm, PLLC

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2. Plaintiff	RUSSELL TEAL	, individually,	as an heir,	is a resident of	of Clark C	county,
State of Nevada.	RUSSELL was t	he natural bo	rn son of E	VERETT TEA	L, decea	sed.

3. Defendant, the United States of America, may be served by delivering a copy of the Summons and Complaint to the United States Attorney for the District of Nevada.

#### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. The Court has jurisdiction over this lawsuit under 28 U.S.C. §1346 and the U.S. Const., Art. 3, §2, cl. 1. Venue of this suit is proper herein because the events or omissions giving rise to these claims occurred in Las Vegas in the District of Nevada under 28 U.S.C. §1391.

#### **CONDITIONS PRECEDENT**

5. Plaintiffs timely presented these claims in writing to: 1) Matthew Voss, Esq., Counsel for VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, 6900 North Pecos Road, North Las Vegas, Nevada 89085; 2) Suzanne Will, Esq., Office of Chief Counsel, San Francisco VA Medical Center, 4150 Clement Street, San Francisco, California 94121; 3) Meghan Flanz, Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420; and, 4) Mark Romaneski, Esq., VA Office of Regional Counsel, Region 19, 650 East Indian School Road, Bldg. 24, Phoenix, Arizona 85012. The claims were received by Defendant on or about March 15, 2018 and Defendant failed to make a final disposition of this claim after it was presented.

#### **FACTS**

- 6. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference Paragraphs 1-5 and all other facts and allegations of this Complaint, as though fully restated herein.
- EVERETT TEAL (deceased) (hereinafter "EVERETT") was a Veteran who 7. received care at the Southern Nevada VA Health Care System for the time period at issue.
- 8. EVERETT had a prior history of anemia in neoplastic disease and chronic lymphoid leukemia.

ONE Summerlin	1980 Festival Plaza Drive, Ste. 270	Las Vegas, Nevada 89135	Phone: 702/869-0800 Fax: 702/869-0900	
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9. EVERETT's chronic lymphoid leukemia was diagnosed and entered into his V
record on or about February 3, 2014.
40. On an about June 25, 2015, Mr. Toolie healthcare providers prescribed th

- 10. On or about June 25, 2015, Mr. Teal's healthcare providers prescribed the medication mometasone furoate, 220MCG by an inhaler to be used twice a day.
- 11. In August 2015, Dr. Stephen Billmyer, an employee of the VA, recommended that Mr. Teal receive Zostavax (Zoster Vaccine) for shingles.
- 12. The VA computer system provided a checklist to go through to determine whether or not the vaccine should be given. The computer system walks one through the contraindications for the administration of the vaccine.
- 13. The medical records reveal the conditions for not administering the vaccine and the answers provided by the VASNHS healthcare provider:

## Patient should not receive the vaccine if any of the following are met: Patient has a weakened immune system because of:

- a. Has the patient received the herpes zoster vaccine before? Answer in the Records- No;
- b. Does the patient have any anaphylactic allergy to neomycin or gelatin? Answer in the Records- No;
- c. Is the patient actively being treated with chemotherapy or radiation? Answer in the Records-No:
- d. Is the patient prescribed prednisone > 5mg or equivalent? Answer in the Records – No;
- e. Is the patient prescribed high dose inhaled corticosteroids? Answer in the Records - No;
- f. Is the patient immunocompromised? Answer in the Records-No;
- g. Is the patient prescribed immunosuppressive agents? Answer in the Records-No;

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h.	Does the patient have untreated active TB?	Answer in the Records-
No	);	

- I. Is the patient taking an anti-viral that prevents viral replication? Answer in the Records- No;
- j. Is there a patient history of cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system? Answer in the Records- No;
- k. Has the patient received any attenuated, live vaccines in the last 4 weeks? Answer in the Records- No;
- 14. On August 31, 2015, the information listed above was "allegedly" reviewed prior to administering Zostavax, including the medications EVERETT was currently on, which included mometasone furoate.
- 15. Despite the fact that EVERETT had lymphoma/leukemia and was on mometasone furoate, the vaccine was administered to EVERETT.
- 16. Approximately one week later, EVERETT developed sores/rash on his body and presented to the ER.
- 17. The records indicate a diagnosis of chickenpox and the genesis for same was varicella zoster.
- 18. EVERETT saw Dr. Stephen Billmyer on or about October 29, 2015 to discuss the failure of the chickenpox to resolve. Dr. Billmyer mistakenly tried to claim that administration of the vaccine was appropriate and also tried to blame the signs of chickenpox as evidence of leukemia.
- 19. On February 17, 2016, EVERETT saw Dr. Billmyer again who acknowledges that EVERETT'S skin lesions are consistent with chickenpox which have not totally resolved.
- 20. On March 5, 2016, EVERETT presented to the ER at St. Rose Dominican Hospital Rose De Lima Campus with complaints of shortness of breath, dry cough and fever and indicated that he is recovering from chickenpox.

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- 21. Shortly after discharge from St. Rose Dominican, EVERETT returns to the hospital with complaints of shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.
  - 22. On March 23, 2016, EVERETT TEAL died in the hospital.
- 23. The medical providers who saw, examined and/or evaluated EVERETT during the applicable time period were VA employees and/or agents and other employees of Defendant and they were all acting within the course and scope of such employment.

#### FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

## (Federal Tort Claims Act - Professional Negligence)

- 24. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference Paragraphs 1 23 and all other facts and allegations of this Complaint, as though fully restated herein.
- 25. Defendant's employees and/or agents owed a duty to act in the same manner as an ordinarily prudent physician/healthcare provider in the same or similar circumstance in caring for, diagnosing and treating EVERETT.
- 26. Defendant held itself and its employees and agents out to EVERETT as a provider(s) of health care with the requisite and competent medical personnel and staff to properly care for EVERETT.
- 27. Defendant, by and through its VA physicians, agents and employees, owed EVERETT a duty to provide reasonable and ordinary medical care and treatment to EVERETT in compliance with the standard of care required of similar healthcare providers.
- 28. Defendant, by and through its VA physicians, agents and employees, fell below the standard of care by giving EVERETT the Zoster Vaccine when said vaccine was contraindicated in light of his documented leukemia and his taking mometasone furoate. (See Affidavit of Michael Mall, M.D., attached hereto as Exhibit "1", and incorporated herein by reference).

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<ol><li>As a result of all of Defendant's breaches of the standard of care, EVERETT</li></ol>
improperly received the Zoster Vaccine which led to EVERETT'S illness and ultimately his
death. (See Exhibit "1").

- 30. As a result of all of Defendant's breaches of the standard of care, EVERETT experienced unnecessary pain and suffering, was required to endure treatment, and ultimately died as a result of Defendant's negligent actions. (See Exhibit "1").
- 31. The acts and omissions on the part of the VA physicians, agents and/or employees amounted to negligence and such negligence was a proximate cause of EVERETT'S death. Said physicians, agents and/or employees were at all times material. hereto acting within the course and scope of their employment with Defendant. Under the laws of the State of Nevada, a private person would be liable to Plaintiffs for the complained of acts and omissions. Under 28 U.S.C. §1346(b), the United States of America is liable to Plaintiffs for their damages.
- 32. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence, Plaintiffs JEANETTE TEAL and RUSSELL TEAL, (individually, as heirs and/or as the Special Administratrix of the Estate of Everett Teal) have suffered some and/or all of the following: grief, sorrow, loss of society, support and companionship, loss of probable support, loss of household services, (all past and future), medical bills and/or funeral expenses and other damages allowed and recoverable under Nevada's wrongful death statute, which damages are in an amount in excess of the minimal jurisdictional limits of this Court.

#### SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

## (Federal Tort Claims Act - Negligence)

- 33. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference Paragraphs 1 - 32 and all other facts and allegations of this Complaint, as though fully restated herein.
- 34. Defendant had a duty to create a system for the VA that would help insure that mistakes like the one in the present claim did not happen.

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35.	In the present case, EVERETT had leukemia and was on mometasone
furnate and s	aid information was in his medical chart.

- The Defendant should have developed a system which would have 36. created what is commonly called a "hard stop" which would have advised the provider not to administer the Zoster Vaccine due to medical conditions documented in the medical chart like leukemia and the taking of mometasone furoate. (See Exhibit "1").
- Had such a "hard stop" been in place, the Defendant would not have 37. administered the Zoster Vaccine and EVERETT would still be alive.
- Defendant's breach of its duty to create "hard stops" caused the death of 38. EVERETT.
- 39. As a result of all of Defendant's breaches of the standard of care, EVERETT experienced unnecessary pain and suffering, was required to endure treatment, and ultimately died.
- As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's negligence, Plaintiffs 40. JEANETTE TEAL and RUSSELL TEAL, (individually, as heirs and/or as the Special Administratrix of the Estate of Everett Teal) have suffered some and/or all of the following: grief, sorrow, loss of society, support and companionship, loss of probable support, loss of household services, (all past and future), medical bills and/or funeral expenses and other damages allowed and recoverable under Nevada's wrongful death statute, which damages are in an amount in excess of the minimal jurisdictional limits of this Court.

## REQUEST AND PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Honorable Court enter judgment in their favor and against Defendant and award Plaintiffs the following:

- Actual damages in an amount in excess of \$20,000,000.00; a.
- Costs of suit; b.

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The Gage Law Firm, PLLC ONE Summerlin

- c. Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, as provided by law;
- d. All other relief the Court deems appropriate.

Dated this day of February, 2019.

THE GAGE LAW FIRM, PLLC

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Nevada Bar No. 6943
dcreasy@gagelawfirm.com
DANIAL O. LAIRD, M.D., J.D.
Nevada Bar No. 11831
dlaird@gagelawfirm.com
ONE Summerlin
1980 Festival Plaza Drive, Ste. 270
Las Vegas, Nevada 89128
(702)869-0800/(702)869-0900 (fax)
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

# EXHIBIT 1

## AFFIDAVIT OF MICHAEL MALL, M.D.

STATE OF NEVADA	) )ss:
COUNTY OF CLARK	)

MICHAEL MALL, M.D., being duly sworn, deposes and says:

- 1) I am over the age of 18, and have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein, and I am competent to testify thereto, and could and would testify under oath if called to do so.
- 2) I am a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Nevada and practice in the area of Internal Medicine.
- 3) Attached to this affidavit is a true and correct copy of my curriculum vitae.
- 4) I am familiar with the standard of care for the administration of a variety of vaccines, including Zostavax and know of the precautions that must be taken prior to administering Zostavax.
- 5) I have reviewed the following medical records of Everett Teal, provided to me by Plaintiffs' counsel:
  - (a) Medical records from the VA of Southern Nevada (on disc);
  - (b) Medical records from St. Rose Dominican Hospital Rose De Lima Campus (on disc);
  - (c) Death Certificate for Everett Teal;
  - (d) Manufacturer insert for Zostavax;
  - (e) Manufacturer insert for Mometasone furoate;

- On February 3, 2014, Mr. Teal was diagnosed with chronic lymphoid leukemia.

  It appears that this information was placed in Mr. Teal's VA records on this same date.
- 7) On June 25, 2015, Mr. Teal's healthcare providers prescribed the medication mometasone furoate, 220MCG by an inhaler to be used twice a day. This is considered a high dose of a corticosteroid
- 8) In August 2015, Dr. Stephen Billmyer recommended that Mr. Teal receive Zostavax (Zoster Vaccine) for shingles.
- 9) Based upon the records, the VA computer system generated an automatic checklist to determine if the vaccine should be administered to a VA patient.
- 10) There are three specific questions which the checklist provided erroneous information:
  - (a) The checklist indicated that Mr. Teal was not on a high dose inhaled corticosteroid;
  - (b) The checklist indicated that Mr. Teal was not immunocompromised;
  - (c) The checklist indicated that Mr. Teal did not have a history of cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system.
- Despite the fact that he was on a high dose inhaled corticosteroid, had an immunocompromised system and had a history of lymphoid leukemia, Mr. Teal received Zostavax.
- 12) Mr. Teal presented to St. Rose Dominican Hospital Rose De Lima Campus about one week later complaining of a rash on his body. The physician at the ER promptly diagnosed Mr. Teal with chickenpox due to Zostavax.

- 13) Mr. Teal saw Dr. Billmyer on October 29, 2015 and again on February 17, 2016, wherein Dr. Billmyer notes the rash/sores and acknowledges that rash/sores/lesions are consistent with chickenpox.
- On March 5, 2016, Mr. Teal presents to the ER at St. Rose Dominican Hospital Rose De Lima Campus with complaints of shortness of breath, dry cough and fever. Mr. Teal is diagnosed with influenza, pneumonia and sepsis. Mr. Teal was discharged on March 12, 2016.
- 15) Less than 24 hours later, Mr. Teal is again admitted to St. Rose Dominican Hospital with complaints of shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.
- Mr. Teal's condition deteriorates to the point that he is placed on a ventilator in an attempt to assist his breathing. Unfortunately, the doctors' efforts are not successful and Mr. Teal succumb to a variety of complications including respiratory failure, pneumonia and sepsis.
- 17) It is important to note that Mr. Teal was found to have not just influenza, but also fungus growing in his sputum, rare gram positive rods and gram positive cocci which is evidence of an immune system which has completely and utterly failed.
- 18) Based upon my review of the medical records, it is my opinion that Dr. Stephen Billmyer, the VA of Southern Nevada employees and/or agents breached the standard of care in the following manner:
  - (a) Administering Zostavax to a patient taking a high dose corticosteroid (in this case mometasone furoate);
  - (b) Administering Zostavax to a patient with an immunocompromised system;

- (c) Administering Zostavax to a patient with a history of cancer affecting the bone marrow or lymphatic system;
- 19) Furthermore, it is my opinion that had the VA of Southern Nevada had what is commonly called a "hard stop" in place (a system/program which would automatically note that the administration of a vaccine is contraindicated due to a patients medical condition), Zostavax would not have been administered to Mr. Teal.
- As a direct result of the administration of Zostavax, Mr. Teal's immune system was compromised, first manifested by the diagnosis of chickenpox, followed by pneumonia, influenza, sepsis and the finding of fungus growing in his sputum, rare gram positive rods and gram positive cocci.
- 21) The administration of Zostavax not only compromised Mr. Teal's immune system but caused a complete meltdown of his immune system resulting in his death.
- 1 have reviewed the medical bills from St. Rose Dominican Hospital Rose De Lima Campus and believe them to be reasonable, necessary and related to the wrongly administered Zostavax.
- 23) My opinions expressed herein are to a reasonable degree of medical probability.

24) I reserve the right to supplement this Affidavit in the event that additional information and/or documentation is supplied to me.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT

MICHAEL MALL, M.D.

Subscribed and Swom to before me this <u>28</u> day of December, 2017.

JULIANNA M. IBARRA
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF NEVADA
My Commission Expires: 06-08-18
Certificate No: 09-11307-1

NOTARY PUBLIC

# CURRICULUM VITAE Michael Scott Mall, M.D.

7455 W Washington Ave Suite #400 Las Vegas, Nevada 89128 (702) 733-7966 (702) 341-0504-fax



#### **Professional Experience:**

2004 – Present Principal Investigator/Sub-investigator

Affiliated Clinical Research, Inc.

501 S. Rancho, Suite C12

Las Vegas, Nevada

2012 – present Michael S. Mall, MD

Medical Concierge Medical Practice 7455 W Washington Ave Suite #400

Las Vegas, NV 89128

2006—2012 Michael S. Mall, MD

Medical Concierge Practice 3201 S Maryland Parkway #220

Las Vegas, NV 89109

1995 – 2006 Primary Care

Office of Michael Scott Mall, MD 3201 S. Maryland Parkway, Suite 220

Las Vegas, Nevada

1990 – 1995 Staff Physician

Kenneth G. Fox, M.D. Ltd.

Las Vegas, Nevada

1987 – 1990 Resident Physician

Phoenix Baptist Hospital

Phoenix, Arizona

#### **Professional Positions:**

Sunrise Hospital
Vice Chief of Staff 2005-2007
Board of Trustees 2003-2005
Medical Executive Committee 1995-1997, 2001-2003
Chief of Family Practice Department 1995-1997
Chair of Medical Records Committee 1999-2007

1984 – 1987 American Academy of Family Physicians Public Relations and

Marketing Committee

American Academy of Family Physicians Chairperson of the

National Conference of Student Members

#### Licenses/Certifications/Awards:

1990 – 2011 Board Certified American Board Family Practice

1990 – Present State of Nevada license # 6074

Current Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams,

National Institute of Health (NIH) Course

#### Memberships:

Clark County Medical Society
Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce
LAMBDA Chamber of Commerce
Las Vegas Health & Fitness Chamber of Commerce (Charter Member)

#### Clinical Research Experience:

A Multicenter, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Parallel-Group Study Evaluating the Efficacy and Safety of XXX for the Treatment of Vasomotor Symptoms of Menopause in Postmenopausal Women

## Clinical Research Experience (continued):

A Phase II, Double-Blind, Randomized, Dose-Cohort Escalation Study of Oral, Enteric-Coated XXX and Placebo in Patients with Chronic, Non-Malignant Pain and Opioid-Induced Constipation

A Phase III, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled and Open-Label Active-Controlled Study to Evaluate the Safety and Efficacy of XXX Treatment in men with Secondary Hypoganadism

A Multicenter, Randomized, Double-Blind, Parallel Group, 12 Week Study to Evaluate the Efficacy and Safety of XXX (dosed as coadministered XXX and XXX Tablets) Versus XXX in Patients with Mixed Hyperlipidemia

An Open Label, Dose Escalation, Multiple Center Study To Evaluate The Safety And Efficacy Of  $XXX^{\mathsf{TM}}$  Treatment In Men With Secondary Hypogonadism And Who Completed XXX

A Phase II, Multicenter, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blinded Study of the Selective Progesterone Receptor Modulator XXX in Pre-Menopausal Women with Symptomatic Leiomyomata

A Multicenter, Open-Label, Dose-Titration, Safety And Efficacy One Year Extension Study Of The Selective Progesterone Receptor Modulator XXX In Pre-Menopausal Women With Symptomatic Leiomyomata Who Have Previously Completed Study XXX

A Phase III, Flexible-Dose Titration Followed by a Randomized Double-Blind Study of Controlled-Release XXX Compared to Placebo in Patients with Osteoarthritis Pain

A Long-Term, Randomized, Double-Blind, Parallel-Group, Placebo-Controlled, Radiographic Study to Investigate the Safety and Efficacy of Orally Administered XXX in Subjects with Symptomatic Osteoarthritis of the Knee

Safety and Efficacy of XXXXXX versus Vibramycin for the Treatment of Uncomplicated Urogenital Chlamydia trachomatis Infection: A Randomized, Double-blind, Double-dummy, Active-controlled Multicenter Study

A Randomized, Parallel, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Exploratory Study to Evaluate the Efficacy of XXXXX in Improving Glycemic Control in Men with Secondary Hypogonadism or Adult Onset Idiopathic Hypogonadotropic Hyprogonadism (AIHH) and Type 2 Diabetes mellitus with Sub-Optimum Treatment.

## Clinical Research Experience (continued):

A Randomized, Double Blind, Placebo and Active Controlled, Parallel, Multi-Center Phase IIb Study to Evaluate Normalization of Morning Testosterone Levels in Men with Secondary Hypogonadism with Confirmed Morning Testosterone Levels <250 ng/dL that Wish to Preserve Their Reproductive Status and are Not Currently being Treated with Topical XXXXXXXXX.

A Phase 3, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Multicenter, Randomized Withdrawal Study To Evaluate The Analgesic Efficacy, Safety, And Tolerability Of XXXX In Opioid naive Subjects With Moderate To Severe Chronic Low Back Pain Requiring Around-The-Clock Opioid Analgesia For An Extended Period Of Time

A Phase 3, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Multicenter, Randomized Withdrawal Study To Evaluate The Analgesic Efficacy, Safety, And Tolerability Of XXXX In Opioid experienced Subjects With Moderate To Severe Chronic Low Back Pain Requiring Around-The-Clock Opioid Analgesia For An Extended Period Of Time

Qualitative Interviews with Patients Diagnosed with Endometriosis				
Michael Scott Mall, M.D.	Date			

JS 44 (Rev. 12/12)

## **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the

purpose of initiating the civil do	ocket sneet. (SEE INSTRUC	HONS ON NEXT PAGE C	IF IHIS FC	TRIVI.)					
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as heir of the Estate of E				Causty of Bosidans	of First Lie	tad Dafandant			
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(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A David O. Creasy, Esq., D ONE Summerlin, 1980 Fe (702) 869-0800	anial Laird, Esq. of Th	e Gage Law Firm,	PLLC /	Attorneys (If Known) Unknown					
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	28 U.S.C. Section	n 1346	are filing (	(Do not cite jurisdictional sta		diversity):			
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THE DESCRIPTION				DEMAND \$		CHECK YES only			
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VIII. RELATED CAS	E(S)								
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