

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

**IN RE: HAIR RELAXER MARKETING
SALES PRACTICES AND PRODUCTS
LIABILITY LITIGATION**

Case No. 23 C 818

MDL No. 3060

Judge Mary M. Rowland

**ORDER GRANTING PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A PLAINTIFFS'
LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Upon consideration of Consensus Plaintiffs' Petition for Appointment of a Plaintiffs' Leadership Committee (ECF No. 14), the Petition is granted for the reasons stated herein.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. Applicability of Order

This Order shall govern the practice and procedure before this Court regarding *In re: Hair Relaxer Marketing Sales Practices and Products Liability Litigation*, MDL No. 3060 (the "Litigation") and all related actions that have been or will be originally filed in, transferred to, or removed to this Court and assigned thereto. This Order is binding on all parties and their counsel in all cases currently pending or subsequently made part of the Litigation.

2. Plaintiffs' Leadership Counsel Appointments

The Court has reviewed the application materials of counsel seeking to serve in leadership positions and makes the following appointments based upon the criteria set forth in the Court's MDL Case Management Order No. 1 (ECF No. 3), specifically: (a) willingness and availability to commit to a time-consuming project; (b) ability to work cooperatively with others; (c) professional experience in this type of litigation; (d) access to sufficient resources to advance the litigation in a timely manner; and (e) diversity.

A. Plaintiffs' Co-Lead Counsel

Benjamin L. Crump
Ben Crump Law Firm
122 South Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Tel.: (850) 224-2020
Email: ben@bencrump.com

Fidelma Fitzpatrick
Motley Rice LLC
40 Westminster Street, Fifth Floor
Providence, RI 02903
Tel.: (401) 457-7728
Email: ffitzpatrick@motleyrice.com

Michael A. London
Douglas & London, P.C.
59 Maiden Lane, Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10038
Tel.: (212) 566-7500
Email: mlondon@douglasandlondon.com

Diandra "Fu" Debrosse Zimmermann
DiCello Levitt LLC
Ten North Dearborn Street, Sixth Floor
Chicago, IL 60602
Tel.: (312) 214-7900
Email: fu@dicellolevitt.com

B. Plaintiffs' Liaison Counsel

Edward A. Wallace
Wallace Miller
150 N. Wacker Dr., Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
Tel.: (312) 261-6193
Email: eaw@wallacemiller.com

C. Plaintiffs' Executive Committee ("PEC")

Brian Barr
Levin Papantonio Rafferty
316 South Baylen St.
Pensacola, FL 32502
Tel.: (850) 435-7044
Email: bbarr@levinlaw.com

Tim Becker
Johnson Becker
444 Cedar St., Suite 1800
St. Paul, MN 55101
Tel.: (612) 436-1804
Email: tbecker@johnsonbecker.com

Jayne Conroy
Simmons Hanly Conroy
112 Madison Avenue, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel.: (212) 257-8482
Email: jconroy@simmonsfirm.com

Kelly M. Dermody
Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein
275 Battery Street, Suite 2900
San Francisco, CA 94111
Tel.: (415) 956-1000
Email: kdermody@lchb.com

Jennifer Hoekstra
Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz, PLLC
17 E. Main St.
Pensacola, FL 32502
Tel.: (850) 202-1010

LaRuby May
May Jung
3216 11th Place SE
Washington, DC 20032
Tel.: (202)869-3735

Email: jhoekstra@awkolaw.com

Rene F. Rocha
Morgan & Morgan
400 Poydras St., Suite 1515
New Orleans, LA 70130
Tel.: (954) 318-0268
Email: rrocha@forthepeople.com

Navan Ward
Beasley Allen
2839 Paces Ferry Rd SE, Suite 400
Atlanta, GA 30339
Tel.: (404)751-1162
Email: navan.ward@beasleyallen.com

Email: laruby@mayjung.com

Larry Taylor
The Cochran Firm
1825 Market Center Blvd #500
Dallas, TX 75207
Tel.: (214) 466-7620
Email: ltaylor@cochrantexas.com

D. Plaintiffs' Steering Committee ("PSC")

Anne Andrews
Andrews & Thornton
4701 Von Karman Ave., Suite 300
Newport Beach, CA 92660
Tel.: (949)748-1000
Email: aa@andrewsthornton.com

Thomas P. Cartmell
Wagstaff & Cartmell LLP
4740 Grand Avenue, Suite 300
Kansas City, MO 64112
Tel.: (816)701-1100
Email: tcartmell@wcllp.com

Erin Copeland
Fibich Leebron Copeland Briggs
1150 Bissonnet
Houston, TX 77005
Tel.: (713) 751-0025
Email: ecopeland@fibichlaw.com

Lee Floyd
Breit Biniazan
2100 East Cary Street, Suite 310
Richmond, VA 23223
Tel.: (804)351-9040
Email: lee@bbtrial.com

Greg Cade
Environmental Law Group
2160 Highland Ave.
Birmingham, AL 35205
Tel.: (205)328-9200
Email: GregC@elglaw.com

C. Andrew Childers
Childers, Schleuter & Smith
1932 North Druid Hills Road, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30319
Tel.: (404)419-9500
Email: achilders@cssfirm.com

Maria Fleming
Napoli Shkolnik
1500 West 3rd Street
Cleveland, OH 44113
Tel.: (844)230-7676
Email: mflaming@napolilaw.com

Kendra Y. Goldhirsch
Chaffin Luhana LLP
600 Third Avenue, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10016
Tel.: (888)480-1123
Email: goldhirsch@chaffinluhana.com

Kristine Kraft
Schlichter Bogard & Denton
100 South Fourth Street, Suite 1200
St. Louis, MO 63102
Tel.: (314) 884-7706
Email: kkraft@uselaws.com

Melanie Muhlstock
Parker Waichman
6 Harbor Park Dr.
Port Washington, NY 11050
Tel.: (516)466-6500
Email: mmuhlstock@yourlawyer.com

Michelle Parfitt
Ashcraft & Gerel, LLP
1825 K Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006
Tel.: (703)824-4772
Email: mparfitt@ashcraftlaw.com

EricaRae Garcia
Weitz & Luxenberg
700 Broadway
New York, NY 10003
Tel.: (212)558-5825
Email: egarcia@weitzlux.com

Richard W. Schulte
Wright & Schulte LLC
865 S. Dixie Dr.
Vandalia, OH 45377
Tel.: (937)435-7500
Email: rschulte@yourlegalhelp.com

L. Chris Stewart
Stewart Mille Simmons
55 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd NW, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30308
Tel.: (404)589-3476
Email: cstewart@smstrial.com

Mikal Watts
Watts Guerra
4 Dominion Dr., Bld 3, Suite 100
San Antonio, TX 78257

Buffy Martines
Laminack, Pirtle & Martines
5020 Montrose Blvd., 9th Floor
Houston, TX 770606
Tel.: (713)292-2750
Email: buffym@lpm-triallaw.com

David A. Neiman
Romanucci & Blandin, LLC
321 N Clark St. #900
Chicago, Illinois 60654
Tel.: (312) 253-8810
Email: dneiman@rblaw.net

Syreeta Poindexter
Babin Law
65 E. State St., Suite 1300
Columbus, OH 43215
Tel.: (614)412-0877
Email: syreeta.poindexter@babinlaws.com

Steve Rotman
Hausfeld
One Marina Park Dr., Suite 1410
Boston, MA 02210
Tel.: (617)207-0602
Email: srotman@hausfeld.com

Ashlie Case Sletvold
Peiffer Wolf Carr Kane Conway & Wise, LLP
6370 SOM Center Road, Suite 108
Cleveland, OH 44139
Tel.: (216) 260-0808
Email: asletvold@peifferwolf.com

Aimee Wagstaff
Wagstaff Law Firm
940 N. Lincoln St.
Denver, CO 80203
Tel.: (720)208-9414
Email: awagstaff@wagstafflawfirm.com

Tel.: (210)447-0500

Email: mcwatts@wattsguerra.com

3. Designations, Funding, Future Changes in Leadership Structure

All appointments to leadership, liaison, and committee positions are for a period of one year. Each appointee must apply for continued service thereafter.

These designations are of a personal nature. Accordingly, the Court looks to these counsel to undertake personal responsibility to perform the designated functions, and should they become unable to do so, the Court reserves the discretion to replace counsel on their request or on the Court's own motion. This Court may amend or expand the PEC and/or PSC upon request of the respective Committees or on its own motion if and as circumstances warrant.

This Court is mindful that counsel within the PEC and PSC will be advance funding much of the common benefit litigation and that each of the members of the PEC and PSC have warranted their ability and willingness to advance fund the common litigation as determined necessary by the Co-Leads. The failure of any member of the PEC or PSC to meet any of the advanced funding obligations as determined are necessary by the Co-Leads may constitute good cause for removal from the PSC.

The Co-Leads, together with input from the PEC and PSC, shall also endeavor to create a Leadership Development Committee ("LDC") to promote and advance diversity amongst this Litigation's leadership team. The LDC shall be created within 30 days of this Order, including a chair-person for the LDC.

4. General Responsibilities of Counsel

Counsel are expected to familiarize themselves with the Manual for Complex Litigation, Fourth ("MCL 4th"), so that they may suggest procedures that will facilitate the "just, speedy, and inexpensive determination" of this Litigation. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 1. These procedures include,

but are not limited to, structure and timing of discovery plans, amendments of pleadings, pretrial consideration of substantive issues, communications, and the like. Counsel are also required to review and familiarize themselves with the Local Rules for the Northern District of Illinois.

All attorneys carrying out such common benefit work who may look to any common fund or agreement for reimbursement or compensation shall maintain and timely submit time and expense records in accordance with guidelines to be set by the Court in a subsequent Case Management Order. Notwithstanding, all such reimbursement and compensation shall be subject to the Court's final approval.

5. Duties of Co-Lead Counsel

It shall be the responsibility of Co-Lead Counsel to provide oversight to and coordinate the responsibilities of the PEC and PSC. The duties of Co-Lead Counsel, and as delegated by such to the PEC and PSC, include but are not limited to the following:

Administration

- a. Call meetings of counsel for Plaintiffs for any appropriate purpose;
- b. Perform any task necessary and proper for the PSC to accomplish its responsibilities as defined by the Court's orders, including organizing sub-committees comprised of plaintiffs' attorneys not on the PSC and assigning them tasks consistent with the duties of the PSC;
- c. Monitor the activities of the PEC and PSC and other co-counsel to ensure that schedules are met and unnecessary expenditures of time and funds are avoided;
- d. Maintain adequate files of all pretrial matters, including establishing and maintaining a document or exhibit depository, in either real or virtual format, and having those documents available, under reasonable terms and conditions, for examination by all

- Plaintiffs or their attorneys in the MDL proceedings;
- e. Provide periodic reports to non-PSC plaintiffs' counsel concerning the status of the litigation on no less than a quarterly basis;
 - f. Coordinate services and filings;
 - g. Maintain and distribute to co-counsel and to Defendants' Counsel an up-to-date service list;
 - h. Receive and distribute pleadings, all Court orders, and motions, provided all counsel shall continue to receive all notices through the Court's CM/ECF system;
 - i. Maintain, in conjunction with their accountant, records of receipts and disbursements advanced by members of the PSC and received by the PSC and to report in writing to the PSC concerning disbursements and receipts;
 - j. Act as the treasurer for any common benefit assessments and expenses. As treasurer for said account(s), shall deposit and invest all assessments for a litigation fund in an interest bearing insured money market bank account or United States Treasury Bills, and pay reasonable litigation expenses subject to regular views and approval by the Court. The initial and subsequent assessments shall be determined by the PEC. All such assessments shall be subject to final accounting at the appropriate time;
 - k. To maintain and make available to all Plaintiffs' counsel of record at reasonable hours a complete file of all documents served by or upon each party (except such documents as may be available at a document depository);
 - l. To be available for any telephone and/or in-person conferences convened by the Court and to communicate the substance of any such conferences to all other Plaintiffs' counsel; and

- m. Perform such other functions as may be expressly authorized by further orders of the Court.

Discovery

- a. Initiate, coordinate, and conduct all pretrial discovery on behalf of all Plaintiffs who file civil actions in this Court or that are transferred to this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1407 and are part of the MDL proceeding and, to the extent possible, coordinate with any product liability state court actions to avoid duplicative depositions or other inefficient discovery;
- b. Develop and propose to the Court schedules for the commencement, execution, and completion of all discovery on behalf of all Plaintiffs;
- c. Initiate, coordinate, and cause to be issued in the name of all Plaintiffs the necessary discovery requests, motions, and subpoenas pertaining to any witnesses and documents needed to properly prepare for the pretrial discovery of relevant issues developed by the PSC. Similar requests, notices, and subpoenas may be caused to be issued by the PSC upon written requests by the individual attorney in order to assist him/her in preparation of the pretrial stages of his/her clients particular claims;
- d. Identify witnesses to be noticed for deposition, schedule witness depositions and determine the lead examiner(s) for each noticed deposition;
- e. Conduct all discovery in coordinated and consolidated manner on behalf of and for the benefit of all Plaintiffs with the assistance from the PSC; and
- f. Consult with and employ experts as necessary.

Motion Practice and Hearings

- a. Call meetings of counsel for plaintiffs for any appropriate purpose, including

- coordinating responses to questions of other parties or of the Court. Initiate proposals, suggestions, schedules, or joint briefs, and any other appropriate matter(s) pertaining to pretrial proceedings;
- b. Submit and argue or designate other counsel to argue any motions presented to the Court or Magistrate Judge on behalf of all Plaintiffs as well as oppose when necessary any motions submitted by the Defendants or third parties;
 - c. Examine or designate other counsel to examine witnesses and introduce evidence at hearings on behalf of Plaintiffs;
 - d. Act or designate other counsel to act as spokesperson(s) for Plaintiffs at pretrial proceedings and in response to any inquiries by the Court, subject of course to the right of any plaintiff's counsel to present non-repetitive individual or different positions; and
 - e. No pleadings or other papers shall be filed, or discovery conducted concerning liability, on behalf of all Plaintiffs except as prepared on behalf of the PEC and signed by Co-Lead Counsel.

Contact with Defense Counsel

- a. Initiate, coordinate, and conduct (or designate others to do so) the requisite meet and confers with Defendants, confer with Defendants regarding procedural matters, and negotiate and enter into stipulations with Defendants regarding this Litigation; and
- b. Explore or designate other counsel to explore, develop, and pursue settlement options with Defendants on behalf of Plaintiffs.

6. Communications with the Court

All communications from Plaintiffs with the Court should be through Plaintiffs' Co-Lead Counsel or Liaison Counsel. If circumstances require direct correspondence with the Court by

individual counsel, copies of any said communications shall simultaneously be served upon all four Plaintiffs' Co-Lead Counsel and Liaison Counsel by email.

7. Preservation of Privileges

The Court recognizes that cooperation by and among plaintiffs' counsel is essential for the orderly and expeditious resolution of this litigation. The communication of information among and between plaintiffs' counsel shall not be deemed a waiver of the attorney-client privilege and/or work product doctrine, if the privilege or doctrine is otherwise applicable, and all of such persons shall maintain the confidentiality of such communications. Cooperative efforts contemplated above shall in no way be used against any plaintiff by any defendant. Nothing contained in this provision shall be construed to limit the right of any party or counsel to assert the attorney-client privilege or attorney work product doctrine.

Under no circumstances are Co-Lead counsel, Liaison Counsel, the PEC, or any member of the PSC (or later appointed LDC member) responsible for the filings, discovery, or any other issue or matter related to an individual plaintiff's case or claim. More specifically, neither the Co-Lead counsel, Liaison Counsel, the PEC, or any member of the PSC, nor any individual attorney who named thereto, is in any way responsible for the attorney-client relationship and duties and responsibilities each individual attorney or law firm owe their client(s) in prosecution of their individual cases or claims.

Ordered this 2nd day of March, 2023.



Mary M. Rowland
United States District Judge