



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF KANAWHA COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

IN RE: OPIOID LITIGATION

CIVIL ACTION NO. 19-C-9000

THIS DOCUMENT APPLIES TO:

THE TOWN OF MADISON, WEST
VIRGINIA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ALLERGAN PLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 20-C-31 MSH

THE TOWN OF STAR CITY, WEST
VIRGINIA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ALLERGAN PLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 20-C-52 MSH

THE COUNTY OF PENDLETON, WEST
VIRGINIA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ALLERGAN PLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 20-C-53 MSH

THE TOWN OF ROMNEY, WEST VIRGINIA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ALLERGAN PLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 20-C-54 MSH

ORDER REGARDING THE AMNEAL DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS PLAINTIFF'S COMPLAINT FOR FAILURE TO STATE A CLAIM

Pending before the Court is the *Amneal Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Plaintiffs' Complaint for Failure to State a Claim* (Transaction ID 65904555), filed in the above-styled civil actions.¹ The motion has been fully briefed by the parties.²

As explained by the Court in *John W. Lodge Distributing Co., Inc. v. Texaco, Inc.*, 161 W. Va. 603, 604-606, 245 S.E.2d 157, 158-159 (1978):

The purpose of a motion under Rule 12(b)(6) of the West Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure is to test the formal sufficiency of the complaint. For purposes of the motion to dismiss, the complaint is construed in the light most favorable to plaintiff, and its allegations are to be taken as true. Since common law demurrers have been

¹The Amneal Defendants are: Amneal Pharmaceuticals LLC, Amneal Pharmaceuticals of New York, LLC, and Impax Laboratories, LLC.

Plaintiffs are: Town of Madison, Civil Action No. 20-C-31 MSH; Town of Star City, Civil Action No. 20-C-52 MSH; County of Pendleton, Civil Action No. 20-C-53 MSH; and Town of Romney, Civil Action No. 20-C-54 MSH.

² To the extent a party re-states or relies on arguments previously stated in motions to dismiss filed in *Brooke County Commission, et al. v. Purdue Pharma L.P., et al.*, Civil Action Nos. 17-C-248 MSH through 17-C-255 MSH (“*Brooke County*”), and *Monongalia County Commission, et al. v. Purdue Pharma L.P., et al.*, Civil Action Nos. 18-C-222 MSH and 18-C-233 MSH through 18-C-236 MSH (“*Monongalia County*”), the Court incorporates by reference the Orders denying motions to dismiss, entered on December 28, 2018, in *Brooke Co.*, petitions for writ of prohibition refused, June 6, 2019, Orders, State ex. rel. Cardinal Health v. Honorable David W. Hummel, Jr., et al., No. 19-0204, State ex. rel. Purdue Pharma, et al. v. Honorable David W. Hummel, Jr., et al., No. 19-0205, State ex. rel. AmerisourceBergen Drug Corporation, et al. v. Honorable David W. Hummel, Jr., et al., No. 19-0210; and the Orders denying motions to dismiss entered on October 31, 2019, in *Monongalia County*, petition for writ of prohibition refused, February 3, 2020, Order, State ex. rel. AmerisourceBergen Drug Corporation, et al. v. Honorable Alan D. Moats, et al., No. 19-1051.

abolished, pleadings are now liberally construed so as to do substantial justice. W.Va. R.C.P. 8(f). The policy of the rule is thus to decide cases upon their merits, and if the complaint states a claim upon which relief can be granted under any legal theory, a motion under Rule 12(b)(6) must be denied.

* * *

In view of the liberal policy of the rules of pleading with regard to the construction of plaintiff's complaint, and in view of the policy of the rules favoring the determination of actions on the merits, the motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim should be viewed with disfavor and rarely granted. The standard which plaintiff must meet to overcome a Rule 12(b)(6) motion is a liberal standard, and few complaints fail to meet it. The plaintiff's burden in resisting a motion to dismiss is a relatively light one. *Williams v. Wheeling Steel Corp.*, 266 F.Supp. 651 (N.D.W.Va.1967).

A trial court considering a motion to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(6) must "liberally construe the complaint so as to do substantial justice." *Cantley v. Lincoln Co. Comm'n.*, 221 W. Va. 468, 470, 655 S.E.2d 490, 492 (2007) and West Virginia Rule of Civil Procedure, Rule 8(f). "The trial court, in appraising the sufficiency of a complaint on a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, should not dismiss the complaint unless it appears beyond doubt that the plaintiff can prove no set of facts in support of his claim which would entitle him to relief." *Id.* at Syl. pt. 2, quoting Syl. pt. 3, *Chapman v. Kane Transfer Company*, W.Va., 236 S.E.2d 207 (1977).

Having reviewed the motion to dismiss and all of the briefing, the Presiding Judges **FIND** that, construing the Complaints in the light most favorable to Plaintiffs, and taking the allegations as true, the Complaints sufficiently state claims upon which relief can be granted, and the Amneal Defendants have not demonstrated that Plaintiffs can prove no set of facts in support of their claims which would entitle them to relief. Accordingly, the Presiding Judges **DENY** the *Amneal Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Plaintiff's Complaint for Failure to State a Claim* (Transaction ID 65904555) pursuant to Rule 12(b)(6) of the West Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure, filed in the above-styled civil actions, as to all Counts except Plaintiffs' Third Claim for Relief – Violation of

West Virginia Controlled Substances Act; W.Va. Code § 55-7-9, which the Court takes under advisement.

The Presiding Judges further **FIND** that Plaintiffs' claims for common law public nuisance (First Claim for Relief), negligence (Second Claim for Relief), unlawful conduct under W.Va. Code § 55-7-9 (Third Claim for Relief), unjust enrichment (Fourth Claim for Relief), civil conspiracy (Fifth Claim for Relief) and for punitive damages (Sixth Claim for Relief) are not subject to the heightened pleading requirements for fraud claims under Rule 9(b) of the West Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure.

Even if Plaintiffs' claims were subject to a heightened pleading standard, the Presiding Judges **FIND** that Plaintiffs' Complaints contains numerous paragraphs describing the Manufacturing Defendants' misleading marketing efforts and misrepresentations with sufficient particularity. Therefore, the motion to dismiss pursuant to Rule 9(b) is also **DENIED**.

All exceptions and objections are noted and preserved for the record.

A copy of this Order has been electronically served on all counsel of record this day via *File & ServeXpress*.

It is so **ORDERED**.

ENTERED: October 29, 2020.

/s/ Alan D. Moats
Lead Presiding Judge
Opioid Litigation

/s/ Derek C. Swope
Presiding Judge
Opioid Litigation