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SAFETY ALERT SAFETY ALERT
During the economic downturn in the 2007-2008 time period, Congress decided to insure the continued viability of certain banks who were failing because of poor choices they had made. As part of the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) program, Congress “lent” billions of taxpayer dollars to Bank of America (BOA) so that it would not fail. One of the conditions of receiving that money was that BOA would help its mortgage customers by participating in the Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP).

The HAMP program was designed to give relief to homeowners who, because of the economic collapse, could no longer afford their mortgage payments. The program was supposed to provide a straightforward, efficient means of allowing homeowners to modify their mortgages so that they would be able to afford their payments and retain their homes.

While BOA participated in the HAMP program as a condition of accepting the TARP money, it did everything it could to thwart homeowners seeking a HAMP mortgage modification. While other banks’ customers were being approved on their HAMP modification applications almost 90% of the time, BOA customers were being approved at close to 30%.

What we have learned through former BOA employees and supervisors is that BOA engaged in a scheme of deceptions, misrepresentations and outright lies to keep its customers from getting HAMP mortgage modifications. Among other things, BOA would repeatedly and intentionally lose customers modification applications, would falsely claim that the applications were incomplete or stale, would tell applicants that they could not qualify unless they were behind on their payments, would charge its customers unnecessary fees and would not apply customers’ payments to the proper accounts. BOA did this because it figured out that it would make far more money through foreclosures or less favorable mortgage modification than through HAMP modifications.

As a result of its fraud, BOA has been forced to repay the United States government a billion dollars! What BOA has not done, however, is repay all of the customers it defrauded. That’s what our law firm is committed to do for our clients - getting them the justice they deserve. If you had a mortgage prior to January 1, 2009, and applied to BOA for a mortgage modification between January 1, 2009, and December 31, 2016, you may have been a victim of BOA’s fraudulent scheme. Call us today for more information about your legal rights.
Drug manufacturers Roche and their subsidiary Genentech released the drug Actemra® (tocilizumab) in 2010 to treat rheumatoid arthritis (RA). The manufacturers advertised Actemra® as a “unique breakthrough” and implied that Actemra was better and safer than other RA drugs. Other RA drugs are labeled with warnings about the risk of heart attacks, heart failure and lung injuries, but Actemra® has no such warnings.

Recently, a study of over 500,000 adverse events reported to the FDA associated with Actemra® revealed that Actemra appears to have just as high a risk of heart attacks and strokes as other RA drugs. In the study, investigators found that 1,128 people died after using Actemra® and concluded that there was “clear evidence” that the risks of heart attack, stroke and heart failure “were as high or higher for Actemra® patients than for patients taking some competing drugs”.

According to STAT News, patients taking Actemra® are 50% more likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than patients taking Enbrel®, and are more likely to suffer lung disease than those patients taking Remicade®. Actemra® currently carries an FDA black box warning about infections, but there is no mention of heart attacks, strokes or lung injuries.

RA patients taking Actemra® are at risk for the following severe side effects:

- Heart Attack
- Heart Failure
- Stroke
- Life-threatening Infections
- Gastrointestinal Perforation (bowel/intestinal)
- Lung Disease
- Pancreatitis
- Sudden Death

The Justice Attorneys at Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz, PLLC are accepting clients who took Actemra® and suffered a heart attack, stroke, lung condition or other severe adverse reactions. Contact us today for a free consultation.
Two recently published studies confirm that PPI users have a significantly increased risk of developing either acute and/or chronic kidney disease.

Perhaps even worse, the PPI manufacturers had information available to them that their products could cause stomach cancer since the 1980’s. Shockingly, to this day the manufacturers fail to warn users or their doctors about the risk of this deadly condition.

If you or a loved one have been diagnosed with Gastric (stomach) Cancer, Chronic Kidney Disease, Acute Kidney Injury, Renal or Kidney Failure, Acute Interstitial Nephritis, Dialysis Treatment, Kidney Removal Transplant Surgery or related Death, while taking Nexium®, Prilosec®, Prevacid® or other proton pump inhibitor drugs, please call us immediately.

**Heartburn Drugs found to INCREASE RISK of DEVELOPING KIDNEY DISEASE and STOMACH CANCER**

For nearly a decade, manufacturers of PPI’s have been on notice that these drugs can cause kidney disease, including acute interstitial nephritis. Finally, in December of 2014, manufacturers changed their package inserts and labels to warn of an association between PPI’s and interstitial nephritis, diagnosed by kidney biopsy. However, to this day, the PPI products’ labels still fail to provide consumers with a general warning regarding the serious risk of developing chronic kidney disease.

**Invokana®**

Invokana® (canagliflozin) is a diabetes drug that works by helping the kidneys rid the bloodstream of glucose. Unlike traditional diabetes drugs that target the pancreas and liver, Invokana® targets the kidneys to stop the body from reabsorbing sugar.

A number of adverse reactions have been reported to the FDA about the diabetes drug Invokana®.

Side effects including:

• **DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS**
• **AMPUTATIONS**
• **KIDNEY FAILURE**

Most recently, on May 16, 2017, the FDA issued a warning to users of Invokana that it doubles the risk of the user needing to have a toe, foot or leg amputated. There have already been a number of settlements for clients who have had an amputation or developed diabetic ketoacidosis after ingesting Invokana®. If you or a loved one have developed one of these or another serious adverse effect as a result of ingesting Invokana®, we urge you to call us today before it is too late!
Abilify® has been linked to compulsive gambling and binge eating. According to the FDA, the top-selling antipsychotic in the United States, Abilify® (aripiprazole), has been linked via medical studies to compulsive gambling, compulsive shopping, hyper-sexuality and binge eating.

Abilify® is an anti-psychotic drug developed by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., LTD and Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc. Abilify® entered the US market in 2002 after co-opting its development with pharmaceutical manufacturer Bristol-Myers Squibb. Shortly after introduction, Abilify® became the top-seller in the anti-psychotic medication class and was often prescribed for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, autism spectrum disorders and Parkinson’s disease.

Although completely aware of these potential life-ruining side-effects which could result in substantial financial, mental and/or physical damages, it was not until the FDA announced that the Abilify® warnings would be changed that Bristol-Myers Squibb modified its US packaging warnings and risk alerts, circa August 2016.

The change in the warning states:

*Post-marketing case reports suggest that patients can experience intense urges, especially for gambling, and the inability to control these urges while taking Abilify®. Because patients may not recognize these behaviors as abnormal, it is important for prescribers to ask patients or their caregivers specifically about the development of new or intense gambling urges or other urges while being treated with aripiprazole (Abilify®). Urges were reported to have stopped when the dose was reduced or the medication (Abilify®) was discontinued. Compulsive behaviors may result in harm to the patient and others if not recognized.*

Presently, Abilify® lawsuits filed against Bristol-Myers Squibb and Otsuka allege that the uncontrollable, compulsive behaviors were known prior to the 2016 label change. One lawsuit filed on July 25, 2016, in the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts, states that the European Medicines Agency required Otsuka to warn patients and the medical community in Europe that the use of Abilify® includes the risk of pathological gambling. Also, the European label includes additional language under the “Undesirable Effects” section stating “Psychiatric disorders: agitation, nervousness, pathological gambling, suicide attempt, suicidal ideation and completed suicide.”

If you or a loved one has taken Abilify® and struggled with uncontrollable behavior like compulsive gambling and binge eating or if you have amassed a gambling debt due to an uncontrollable urge to gamble, you may have the option to participate in a lawsuit against Bristol-Myers Squibb and Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company. Contact our attorneys today to learn more about your legal rights. There is never a fee unless we collect for you.

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Xarelto® is one of several drugs in a new class of anticoagulants (blood thinners) called direct factor Xa inhibitors. The first of these new class of drugs to gain FDA approval was Pradaxa®. The manufacturer of Pradaxa®, Boehringer Ingelheim, settled the lawsuits it was facing, agreeing to pay $650 million to approximately 4,000 people across the United States for similar bleeding injuries.

Xarelto®, like other blood thinners, carries a risk of internal bleeding. However, there is evidence showing that Xarelto® is not as safe or effective as other blood thinners and that the internal bleeding caused by Xarelto® cannot be controlled or reversed by physicians, unlike the traditional class of blood thinners which includes Coumadin® (warfarin). The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) advises that Xarelto® has been associated with “serious, disabling or fatal injury,” including blood clots or thromboembolic events.

The attorneys of Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz have been at the forefront of the fight for justice for patients injured as a result of ingesting Xarelto®. Senior partner Neil Overholtz was appointed by the federal judge overseeing all cases nationwide to the Plaintiff’s Steering Committee.

AWKO attorneys have been involved in every Xarelto® trial in the country and have led the charge in assembling the evidence necessary to show that the manufacturer failed to adequately warn consumers and their doctors about the risks associated with Xarelto®.

If you or a loved one suffered a harmful side effect such as a stroke, blood clot, or internal bleeding while taking Xarelto®, you may have a valuable legal claim. Contact us today at (844) 432-2774 to speak with one of the attorneys on the forefront of the Xarelto® litigation.
Hernia repair surgeries are an everyday occurrence. There are a variety of techniques that surgeons can employ to repair a hernia. Those techniques include the use of sutures, the use of organic material (from the patient, from a cadaver or from an animal), and the use of synthetic meshes. There are over fifty different synthetic meshes that are used and they vary widely in their composition, manufacture and labeling.

Unfortunately, many hernia repair patients have been implanted with synthetic hernia repair meshes that have dangerous qualities that are not adequately disclosed to the patients or their doctors. Many of these meshes are composed of a substance that reacts adversely inside the body resulting in infection and failure to integrate into the tissue. The failure to integrate leads to the failure of the repair and the need for a revision surgery.

In addition to the unsafe composition of these dangerous meshes, they are defective in their design and warnings. Many of the synthetic meshes will change their shape after being implanted in the body, or they will migrate, sometimes piercing or harming surrounding organs. As a result, hernia repair patients implanted with defective mesh may end up with a bowel obstruction requiring surgical repair or with painful adhesions requiring surgical removal.

Synthetic meshes that have been associated with adverse reactions include:

- Atrium C-Qur Mesh
- Ethicon Physiomesh
- Composix Kuge
- Ventrelax & Composix Mesh
- Bard Perfix Plug
- 3dMas
- Ventrelax
- Supramesh
- Vetrio ST
- Marlex Mesh
- Covidien (Parietex) Anatomical Composite
- Ventral Patch Composite
- Flat Sheet Weave
- Lightweight Weave
- Plug & Patch Mesh

If you or a loved one have undergone a hernia repair with one of these synthetic meshes (or if you’re not sure what mesh was used) and have had complications including revision, lysis of adhesions, bowel repair or bowel resection, please call us today for more information about your legal rights.
SALES OF ESSURE® CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICE HALTED in EVERY COUNTRY EXCEPT the UNITED STATES

Bayer sold its Essure® contraceptive device to women around the world as an effective, convenient, and permanent form of birth control. The Essure system is a metal device shaped like a spring which is implanted in the fallopian tubes and supposed to form a barrier against fertilization. Because of its apparent convenience, the Essure® system was a popular choice for women looking for a long term contraceptive solution.

Once on the market, reports of problems associated with the Essure® device came pouring in from the women who had been implanted. Women were reporting severe pelvic pain, device migration and fracture, perforation of organs, serious infections, severe allergic reaction to the nickel that was used in the device and unintended pregnancies. More than 20,000 of these adverse reaction reports have been filed in the United States.

Faced with mounting evidence that its product was harming women instead of helping them, Bayer agreed to halt sales of the Essure® system in every country except the United States. Bayer’s continued sale of this product in the United States is indefensible and our law firm is committed to obtaining justice for the women Bayer has injured.

If you or a loved one has been implanted with an Essure contraceptive devices and have experienced an adverse reaction including pain, an allergic reaction or infection requiring hospitalization, device migration or fracture, organ perforation, or an unintended pregnancy, please contact us immediately for more information about your legal rights.

JUST FOR MEN HAIR DYE PRODUCTS CAUSE SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS, SCARRING and ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

The popular Just For Men® hair dye products have left thousands of men with facial scars, discoloration or worse. The Just For Men® line of products contain a chemical called PPD which is recognized as one of the most potent allergens on the market.

A significant portion of the population will have an allergic adverse reaction after applying Just For Men® hair dye. Those reactions can be very serious to include permanent scarring, discoloration, and in the worst cases anaphylactic shock.

The Just For Men® manufacturer, Combe Products Inc., has failed to adequately disclose the risk of injury to users of its products. Its instructions for use fail to give users the information they need to determine whether they are at risk of suffering an allergic reaction. What’s worse is that Combe knew that certain populations of users – African Americans and darker skinned people – were at a much greater risk of having an allergic reaction to Just For Men product. As many as 20-25% of all men in those populations may be harmed as a result of using Just For Men®. Despite marketing heavily to the African American community Combe failed to disclose that critical information to its customers.

If you or a loved one used Just For Men® hair dye products and suffered a serious adverse reaction, please contact us today for more information.