

Lipitor Fact Sheet

About Lipitor

Lipitor is a prescription medication in a group of drugs called 'statins'. It is used to lower cholesterol levels in patients with high cholesterol. It is manufactured by Pfizer, Inc. ("Pfizer") and is currently the best selling prescription drug in the world.

Background

Pfizer has had tremendous success in marketing Lipitor. Worldwide sales for Lipitor reached \$10 billion in 2004. The class action lawsuit described here alleges that this success is due in large part to a deceptive advertising and promotional campaign by Pfizer to convince both doctors and patients that Lipitor reduces heart disease and heart attacks for nearly everyone with elevated cholesterol, even though no studies have shown it to be effective for women and those over 65 years of age who do not already have heart disease or diabetes.

Although Lipitor has been on the market since 1996, it wasn't approved for the prevention of heart attacks until 2004. The FDA approved it for this because a large study (called the "ASCOT" study) showed that there was a reduction in heart attacks overall for the approximately 10,000 patients in that study. However, the FDA looked at this study as a whole, rather than looking at the different types of patients in the study. In fact, the women in that study who had no prior history of heart disease who took Lipitor actually had 10% more heart attacks than the 1,000 women taking a placebo. Despite the fact that the FDA approved Lipitor for prevention of heart attacks, there is still no reliable medical evidence that Lipitor or any other statin is effective at preventing heart attacks for women and people over 65, who have no history of heart disease.

Women and seniors are a primary target of Pfizer's Lipitor advertising. The lawsuit alleges that as a result of a deceptive marketing campaign, Pfizer created an artificial demand for Lipitor which would not have existed had there been full and fair disclosure regarding the lack of evidence proving a relationship between Lipitor and a reduced risk of heart disease. The suit further claims that Pfizer's promotional campaign has resulted in billions of dollars in unnecessary drug spending among these two groups of patients at a time when drug and general healthcare costs are spiraling out of control.

PAL Litigation

Health Care For All, a PAL coalition member, and other plaintiffs have filed a nationwide class action lawsuit in US District Court for the District of Massachusetts against Pfizer. The suit alleges that Pfizer engaged in a massive deceptive advertising campaign to convince women and individuals over the age of 65, who do not have a prior history of heart disease or diabetes, that lowering cholesterol by using Lipitor will reduce the risk of heart disease.

The lawsuit alleges that Pfizer engaged in fraudulent and deceptive practices in its marketing of Lipitor and violated various state consumer protection statutes. The suit seeks monetary recovery for the consumers and payors described below, as well as an order enjoining Pfizer from continuing its allegedly unlawful promotion of Lipitor.

Lipitor Plaintiff Classes

The Lipitor class action lawsuit is brought on behalf of:

- 1) All women in the United States without previously medically diagnosed heart disease or diabetes who have taken and paid out of pocket for Lipitor in the last four years;

- 2) All female or males in the United States without previously medically diagnosed heart disease or diabetes who have taken and paid out of pocket for Lipitor in the last four years and who did so while over the age of 65.
- 3) Third-Party Payors (health plans, union benefit funds, self-insured employers and others) who paid for Lipitor used by the patients described above.

For more information:

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