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FILED

October 6, 2023

HON. BRUCE J. KAPLAN, J.S.C.

*Attorneys for Defendants Merck & Co., Inc.
and Merck Sharp & Dohme LLC*

JEWEL GENCO,

Plaintiff,

v.

MERCK & CO., INC., MERCK SHARP &
DOHME CORP., "JOHN DOE," "JANE
DOE," and "XYZ CORP" (FICTITIOUS
NAMES),

Defendants.

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
LAW DIVISION: MIDDLESEX COUNTY

DOCKET NO.: MID-L-006455-22

ORDER: DISMISSAL WITH PREJUDICE

THIS MATTER having been brought before the Court upon motion by Fox Rothschild LLP, attorney for Defendants, Merck & Co., Inc. and Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp. ("Merck"), for an Order to Dismiss the Plaintiffs' complaint with prejudice pursuant to R. 4:23-5(a)(2), for failure to provide a materially complete and certified Plaintiff Fact Sheet ("PFS") as this complaint was dismissed without prejudice on July 7, 2023, and the Court having read and considered the papers submitted in this matter, the opposition thereto, and for the reasons set forth in the attached Statement of Reasons, and for good cause having been shown;

IT IS on this 6th day of October, 2023;

ORDERED that Defendant Merck's Motion to Dismiss with prejudice is **GRANTED**; and it is further

ORDERED that Plaintiffs' complaint, as to Merck & Co. Inc. and Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., is hereby dismissed with prejudice; and it is further

ORDERED that service of this Order shall be deemed effectuated upon all parties upon its upload to eCourts. Pursuant to Rule 1:5-1(a), movant shall serve a copy of this Order on all parties not served electronically within seven (7) days of the date of this order.

/s/ Bruce J. Kaplan
HONORABLE BRUCE J. KAPLAN, J.S.C.

OPPOSED

Statement of Reasons

This matter comes before the Court upon motion by Fox Rothschild LLP, attorney for Defendants, Merck & Co., Inc., and Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp., for an Order to dismiss Plaintiffs' complaint with prejudice pursuant to R. 4:23-5(a)(2), for failure to provide a materially complete and certified Plaintiff Fact Sheet ("PFS"). The Court has read and reviewed the papers submitted and notes that Plaintiff has filed an opposition, oral argument was however waived by both parties.

By way of relevant procedural history, on May 18, 2023, Merck's counsel contacted plaintiff's counsel regarding this case, as Merck had not yet received a PFS despite the deadline for service of the same having passed, however no response was received. On June 2, 2023, Merck's counsel again contacted plaintiff's counsel, but again received no response. During the June 21, 2023 liaison counsel call, this Court granted Merck permission to file a motion to dismiss without prejudice. On July 7, 2023, this Court entered an Order granting Merck's motion to dismiss without prejudice. In addition to dismissing plaintiff Genco's complaint without prejudice, this Court provided plaintiff Genco with sixty (60) days to provide a materially complete PFS before Merck could file a motion to dismiss with prejudice. Plaintiff has not complied, and Defense Counsel has brought the instant unopposed motion to dismiss plaintiff Genco's complaint with prejudice.

In light of Plaintiffs' failure to comply with this Court's Orders and in light of the additional time provided previously, this Court will be entering an Order dismissing this case with prejudice. The Court finds that despite notice and opportunity, Plaintiff has not provided the outstanding discovery, has not reinstated the complaint, and has not filed opposition.

In so doing, the Court notes pursuant to R. 4:23-5(a)(2), if "an order of dismissal ... without prejudice has been entered pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this rule and not thereafter vacated, the party entitled to the discovery may, after the expiration of 60 days from the date of the order, move on notice for an order of dismissal with prejudice." It is well-settled that "dismissal with prejudice is the ultimate sanction, [and that] it will normally be ordered only when no lesser sanction will

suffice to erase the prejudice suffered by the non-delinquent party,” Zaccardi v. Becker, 88 N.J. 245, 253 (1982) (internal citations omitted), “or when the litigant rather than the attorney was at fault.” Ibid. (citing Schlosser v. Kragen, 111 N.J. Super. 337, 341 (1970)).

Our Supreme Court has also held that, “[t]he dismissal of a party’s cause of action, with prejudice, is drastic and is generally not to be invoked except in those cases where the order for discovery goes to the very foundation of the cause of action ... or where refusal to comply is deliberate and contumacious.” Schlosser, 111 N.J. Super. at 341 (citing Tsibikas v. Morrof, 5 N.J. Super. 306 (App. Div. 1949)).

The unfortunate reality is given the length of time of non-compliance, the Court finds there is no “lesser sanction” that can suffice to remedy the violations of this Court’s order.

As it has been more than 60 days since this case was dismissed without prejudice, and Plaintiff remains delinquent on discovery obligations, Defendant Merck’s motion to dismiss with prejudice is granted.