# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA ATLANTA DIVISION

THOMAS E. SMITH, SR.,	§	
Individually and as Administrator of	§	
the Estate of OK HUI SMITH,	§	
deceased,	§	
	§	CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,	§	
	§	FILE NO
V.	§	
	§	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
WILLIAM H. VAN LAAR, DO;	§	
WILLIAM VAN LAAR DO, LLC;	§	
JODI PESCE, and MCDONOUGH	§	
PRIMARY CARE, INC.,	§	
	§	
Defendants.	-	

### COMPLAINT

COMES NOW, Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., individually and as Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith, deceased, and hereby files this Complaint and shows the Court the following:

# PARTIES

1.

Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr. (hereinafter "Plaintiff") is a citizen of the State of Texas.

At all times relevant hereto, Thomas E. Smith, Sr. was lawfully married to Ok Hui Smith, deceased.

### 3.

Thomas E. Smith, Sr. has been duly appointed Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith by the Probate Court of Henry County, Georgia.

### 4.

Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. is a citizen of the State of Georgia and a resident of Henry County, Georgia.

5.

Defendant William Van Laar DO, LLC is a Georgia limited liability company with its principal place of business located at 68 Hampton Street, McDonough, Henry County, Georgia. Defendant William Van Laar DO, LLC's registered agent is William H. Van Laar, D.O., 68 Hampton Street, McDonough, Henry County, Georgia. Defendant William Van Laar DO, LLC is a citizen of the State of Georgia and a resident of Henry County, Georgia.

6.

Defendant Jodi Pesce is a citizen of the State of Georgia and a resident of Henry County, Georgia.

Defendant McDonough Primary Care, Inc. is a for profit Georgia with its principal place of business at 68 Hampton Street, McDonough, Henry County, Georgia. Defendant McDonough Primary Care, Inc.'s registered agent is Dr. William Van Laar, 68 Hampton Street, McDonough, Henry County, Georgia. Defendant McDonough Primary Care, Inc. is a citizen of the State of Georgia and a resident of Henry County, Georgia.

### 8.

On information and belief, and at all times pertinent to this action, Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. was an agent and employee of Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc., and was acting within the course and scope of his employment and agency with said Defendants.

#### 9.

On information and belief, Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc. are liable for the acts and omissions of Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. under the doctrines of agency, *respondeat superior* and other theories of agency-principal law.

On information and belief, and at all times pertinent to this action, Defendant Jodi Pesce was an agent and employee of Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc., and was acting within the course and scope of her employment and agency with said Defendants.

## 11.

On information and belief, Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc. are liable for the acts and omissions of Defendant Jodi Pesce under the doctrines of agency, *respondeat superior* and other theories of agency-principal law.

#### 12.

Defendants have, at all times relevant, conducted business within the State of Georgia, this District and this Division at 68 Hampton Street, McDonough, Henry County, Georgia.

### 13.

The acts and omissions complained of herein occurred in Henry County, Georgia, as did the injuries to and death of Plaintiff's decedent.

Pursuant to Local Rule 3.1(B), this action is properly filed in the Atlanta Division of the Northern District of Georgia because (a) all Defendants reside within this District and within this Division and (b) because the cause of action arose in this District and in this Division.

## 15.

This Court has jurisdiction over the parties to this action.

### 16.

This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action.

### 17.

Venue is proper in this Court.

#### FACTS

## 18.

Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations of the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

### 19.

On August 19, 2013, Mrs. Smith was seen at McDonough Primary Care by Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. from problems with her right great toenail

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and her right thumbnail. Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. diagnosed Mrs. Smith with onychomycosis (nail fungus).

#### 20.

At that visit, Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. issued a prescription to Mrs. Smith for Ketoconazole (Nizoral) 200-mg tablets to be taken once per day for thirty days, with three refills.

### 21.

No baseline liver function/enzyme tests were obtained for Mrs. Smith prior to starting her on Ketoconazole (Nizoral).

#### 22.

Mrs. Smith filled a prescription for Ketoconazole (Nizoral) on August 19, 2013 and subsequently refilled that prescription. Mrs. Smith continued to take Ketoconazole (Nizoral) as instructed for more than four months.

#### 23.

On September 9, 2013, Mrs. Smith was seen by Defendant Pesce at McDonough Primary Care for swelling problems with her wrist and thumb. Liver function/enzyme tests were not ordered or obtained from Mrs. Smith at this visit.

On September 13, 2013, Mrs. Smith was seen by Defendant Pesce at McDonough Primary Care for a routine/preventative health visit. Labs were drawn on this visit. Mrs. Smith's liver function/enzyme tests were in the normal range at this time.

### 25.

On November 26, 2013, Mrs. Smith was seen by Defendant Pesce at McDonough Primary Care with complaints of vaginal issues and constipation. Liver function/enzyme tests were not ordered or obtained from Mrs. Smith at this visit.

### 26.

On December 24, 2013, Mrs. Smith was seen by Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. at McDonough Primary Care. Mrs. Smith's complaints included a cough, runny nose and ear pain for 2 to 3 days; coughing up yellow mucus that day; dark urine for 3 days; and no appetite for 6 to 7 months. A urinalysis was done. Liver function/enzyme tests were not ordered or obtained from Mrs. Smith at this visit. Mrs. Smith was prescribed an antibiotic, Ciprofloxacin.

On January 2, 2014, Mrs. Smith was seen at McDonough Primary Care by Judy Comer, a nurse practitioner, who noted: "Family noticed looking yellow on 12/31/13 and eyes are also yellow. Very tired x 1 week or more. When she eats or drinks causes stomach to hurt and belches a lot." On exam Mrs. Smith was noted to be "very jaundiced" with right upper quadrant pain and tenderness. The assessment was (1) right upper quadrant pain and (2) gross jaundice. The plan was to obtain labs and an urgent abdominal sonogram.

### 28.

Mrs. Smith's lab test results showed profoundly abnormal liver function. An abdominal ultrasound performed that day was also abnormal.

#### 29.

Mrs. Smith was admitted to Piedmont Henry Hospital on January 3, 2014, with admission diagnoses of transaminitis and acute liver failure.

### 30.

After her admission, Mrs. Smith was diagnosed with mixed hepatocellular and cholestatic injury most likely drug induced from Ketoconazole.

Despite the fact that she was prescribed Ketoconazole (Nizoral) for more than four months, only a single liver function/enzyme test was performed on Mrs. Smith between August 19, 2013 and January 1, 2014.

### 32.

Ok Hui Smith died on January 24, 2014 from liver failure and related complications.

#### 33.

At all times material and pertinent to this action, Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. owed Ok Hui Smith a duty to exercise that degree of care and skill employed by physicians generally under the same or similar conditions and like surrounding circumstances as Mrs. Smith presented from August 2013 through January 2014 at McDonough Primary Care.

#### 34.

Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. deviated from and fell below that degree of care and skill employed by physicians generally under same or similar conditions and like surrounding circumstances by prescribing Ketoconazole (Nizoral) to Ok Hui Smith from August 2013 through January 2014 and failing to properly monitor Mrs. Smith's liver function.

Defendant William H. Van Laar, D.O. was otherwise negligent.

36.

At all times material and pertinent to this action, Defendant Jodi Pesce owed Ok Hui Smith a duty to exercise that degree of care and skill employed by nurse practitioners generally under the same or similar conditions and like surrounding circumstances as Mrs. Smith presented in September and November 2013 at McDonough Primary Care.

#### 37.

Defendant Pesce deviated from and fell below that degree of care and skill employed by nurse practitioners generally under same or similar conditions and like surrounding circumstances by failing to properly monitor Mrs. Smith's liver function while she was taking Ketoconazole (Nizoral).

### 38.

Defendant Pesce was otherwise negligent.

## 39.

On information and belief, non-professional agents and employees of Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc. were negligent and breached the applicable standard of care in failing to schedule and/or obtain tests to monitor Ok Hui Smith's liver function during the time she was prescribed Ketoconazole (Nizoral).

40.

On information and belief, non-professional agents and employees of Defendants William Van Laar DO, LLC and/or McDonough Primary Care, Inc. were otherwise negligent.

## **COUNT I – CLAIM FOR WRONGFUL DEATH**

41.

Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations of the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

#### 42.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence of Defendants, their agents and employees, Ok Hui Smith suffered a premature and untimely death.

43.

Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., as surviving spouse of Ok Hui Smith, deceased, seeks and is entitled to recover damages for the full value of the life of Ok Hui Smith in an amount determined by the enlightened conscience of the jury.

### **COUNT II – ESTATE CLAIMS**

44.

Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations of the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

45.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence of Defendants, their agents and employees, Ok Hui Smith endured conscious pain and suffering before her death.

#### 46.

Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., as Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith, is entitled to and seeks damages from Defendants for the conscious pain and suffering endured by Mrs. Smith prior to her death in an amount to be determined by the enlightened conscience of a jury.

#### 47.

Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., as Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith, is entitled to and seeks damages from Defendants for funeral and burial expenses in an amount to be proven at trial.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence of Defendants, their agents and employees, Ok Hui Smith sustained injuries that required extensive medical care and treatment.

#### 49.

Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., as Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith, is entitled to and seeks damages from Defendants for medical expenses in an amount to be proven at trial.

### **COUNT III – CLAIM OF THE UNITED STATES**

### 50.

Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations of the foregoing paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

### 51.

As a direct and proximate result of the negligence of Defendants, their agents and employees, Ok Hui Smith sustained injuries that required extensive medical care and treatment.

### 52.

The medical treatment for Ok Hui Smith was paid, in part, by the United States of America (Tricare).

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Accordingly, Plaintiff Thomas E. Smith, Sr., for the sole use and benefit of the United States of America under the provisions of 42 U.S.C. §§ 2651-2653, and with its express consent, asserts a claim for the reasonable value of said past treatment in an amount to be proven at trial.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff hereby requests the following:

- a. That Defendants be timely served with process;
- b. That Plaintiff have and recover from Defendants, jointly and severally, an amount in excess of \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs;
- c. That Plaintiff have a trial by jury on all claims and issues in this action; and
- d. That Plaintiff have such other and further relief as the Court deems appropriate.

This 15<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2014.

# CASH, KRUGLER & FREDERICKS, LLC

/s/David Krugler\_\_\_\_ DAVID KRUGLER Georgia Bar No. 429929 ANDREW B. CASH Georgia Bar No. 743459 5447 Roswell Road, N.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30342 (404) 659-1710 (404) 264-1149 (fax) dkrugler@ckandf.com acash@ckandf.com

UNITED STATE	S DISTRICT COURT
Northern Dis	strict of Georgia
Thomas E. Smith, Sr., Individually and as Administrator of the Estate of Ok Hui Smith, Deceased	) ) )
Plaintiff(s) v. William H. Van Laar, Do, William Van Laar Do, LLC, Jodi Pesce, and McDonough Primary Care, Inc.	) Civil Action No.
Defendant(s)	) )
SUMMONS D	N A CIVIL ACTION
William H. Van Laar, D.O. To: (Defendant's name and address) Primary Care, Inc. % Mr. Nathan D. Cronic Willis McKepzie, LLP	, William Van Laar Do, LLC, Jodi Pesce and McDonough

Willis McKenzie, LLP 300 Smith Street LaGrange, Georgia 30240

A lawsuit has been filed against you.

Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it) — or 60 days if you are the United States or a United States agency, or an officer or employee of the United States described in Fed. R. Civ. P. 12 (a)(2) or (3) — you must serve on the plaintiff an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The answer or motion must be served on the plaintiff or plaintiff's attorney, whose name and address are:

If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court.

CLERK OF COURT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Clerk or Deputy Clerk

Civil Action No.

#### **PROOF OF SERVICE**

(This section should not be filed with the court unless required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 4 (l))

as received by me on (date)	·•			
I personally served	the summons on the individual at	(place)		
		On (date)	; or	
I left the summons	at the individual's residence or us	ual place of abode with (name)		
	, a person	of suitable age and discretion who res	ides ther	e,
On (date)	, and mailed a copy to th	e individual's last known address; or		
I served the summo	ns on (name of individual)			, who is
designated by law to a	accept service of process on behalf	f of (name of organization)		
		on (date)	; or	
I returned the summ	nons unexecuted because			; or
Other (specify):				
My fees are \$	for travel and \$	for services, for a total of \$	(	)
I declare under penalty	of perjury that this information is	s true.		
nte:				
		Server's signature		
		Printed name and title		····

Server's address

Additional information regarding attempted service, etc:

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JS44 (Rev. 1/13 NDGA)

#### **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

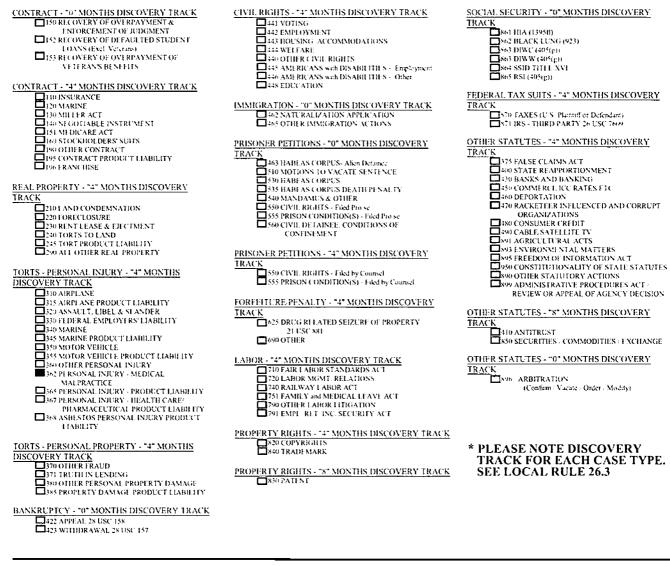
The JS44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket record. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ATTACHED)

I. (a) PLAINTIFF(S)	DEFENDANT(S)
THOMAS E. SMITH, SR., Individually and as Administrator of the Estate of OK HUI SMITH, deceased,	WILLIAM H. VAN LAAR, DO; WILLIAM VAN LAAR DO, LLC; JODI PESCE, and MCDONOUGH PRIMARY CARE, INC.,
(b) COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED PLAINTIFF Bexar County, Texas (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)	COUNTY OF RESIDENCE OF FIRST LISTED DEFENDANT Henry County, Georgia (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)
	NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED
(c) ATTORNEYS (FIRM NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND	ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)
E-MAIL ADDRESS) CASH, KRUGLER & FREDERICKS, LLC DAVID KRUGLER & ANDREW B. CASH 5447 Roswell Road, N.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30342 (404) 659-1710 dkrugler@ckandf.com acash@ckandf.com	Mr. Nathan D. Cronic Willis McKenzie, LLP 300 Smith Street LaGrange, Georgia 30240 (706) 882-2942 ncronic@lag-law.com
	TIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES ACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX FOR PLAINTIFF AND ONE BOX FOR DEFENDANT) (FOR DIVERSITY CASES ONLY)
1 U.S. COVERNMENT   3 FEDERAL QUESTION PLAINTIFF   9 FEDERAL QUESTION (U.S. GOVERNMENT NOT A PARTY)     2 U.S. GOVERNMENT   4 DIVERSITY (INDICATE CITIZENSHIP OF PARTIES IN ITEM III)	F PLF DEF   1 CITIZEN OF THIS STATE 4 4 INCORPORATED OR PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IN THIS STATE   2 CITIZEN OF ANOTHER STATE 5 5 INCORPORATED AND PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS IN ANOTHER STATE   3 CITIZEN OR SUBJECT OF A FOREIGN COUNTRY 6 6 FOREIGN NATION
IV. ORIGIN (PLACE AN "X "IN ONE BOX ONLY)	
I ORIGINAL 2 REMOVED FROM 3 REMANDED FROM 4 REINSTATED OF PROCEEDING STATE COURT APPELLATE COURT REOPENED	TRANSFERRED FROM S ANOTHER DISTRICT (Speelly District) TRANSFERRED FROM G MULTIDISTRICT LITIGATION TRANSFERRED FROM APPEAL TO DISTRICT JUDGE TRANSFERRED FROM TRANSFERRED FROM TRANF
V. CAUSE OF ACTION (CITE THE U.S. CIVIL STATUTE UNDER WHICH JURISDICTIONAL STATUTES UNLESS DIVERS	YOU ARE FILING AND WRITE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF CAUSE - DO NOT CITE
This is a wrongful death (O.C.G.A. Sec. 51-4-2) and medical malpractice (O.C.G.A. Sec. 51-1-27) action filed in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. Sec. 1332 (Diversity Jurisdiction) as Plaintiff is a citizen of Texas and Defendants are citizens of Georgia.	
(IF COMPLEX, CHECK REASON BELOW)	
1. Unusually large number of parties. 6. F	roblems locating or preserving evidence

2. Unusually large number of claims or defenses.	7. Pending parallel investigations or actions by government.
3. Factual issues are exceptionally complex	8. Multiple use of experts.
4. Greater than normal volume of evidence.	9. Need for discovery outside United States boundaries.
5. Extended discovery period is needed.	10. Existence of highly technical issues and proof.

	CONTINUED ON REVERSE
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	· A - · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
	AMOUNT \$ APPLYING IFP
JUDGE	MAG.JUDGE NATURE OF SUIT
	(Refimi)

#### VI. NATURE OF SUIT (PLACE AN "X" IN ONE BOX ONLY)



#### VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

CHECK IF CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.Civ.P. 23 DEMAND S

JURY DEMAND YES NO (CHECK YES ONLY IF DEMANDED IN COMPLAINT)

### VIII. RELATED/REFILED CASE(S) IF ANY

JUDGE

DOCKET NO.\_\_\_\_\_

CIVIL CASES ARE DEEMED RELATED IF THE PENDING CASE INVOLVES: (CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX)

- 2. SAME ISSUE OF FACT OR ARISES OUT OF THE SAME EVENT OR TRANSACTION INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT.
- 3. VALIDITY OR INFRINGEMENT OF THE SAME PATENT, COPYRIGHT OR TRADEMARK INCLUDED IN AN EARLIER NUMBERED PENDING SUIT.
- 4. APPEALS ARISING OUT OF THE SAME BANKRUPTCY CASE AND ANY CASE RELATED THERETO WHICH HAVE BEEN DECIDED BY THE SAME BANKRUPTCY JUDGE.
- 5. REPETITIVE CASES FILED BY <u>PROSE</u> LITIGANTS.

6. COMPANION OR RELATED CASE TO CASE(S) BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY FILED (INCLUDE ABBREVIATED STYLE OF OTHER CASE(S)):

□7. EITHER SAME OR ALL OF THE PARTIES AND ISSUES IN THIS CASE WERE PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED IN CASE NO. , WHICH WAS DISMISSED. This case □ IS □ IS NOT (check one box) SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME CASE.

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

October 15, 2014

DATE