

\$2.6 Million Verdict Awarded Against Mission Flavors and Citrus and Allied Essence

An Orange County jury awarded a \$2.6 million verdict to a man who was diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans as a result of work exposure to diacetyl.

SANTA ANA, CA, USA, February 13, 2015

/EINPresswire.com/ -- An Orange County jury awarded a \$2.6 million verdict to a 38 year-old Tongan American man who was diagnosed with [bronchiolitis obliterans](#) as a result of work exposure to the toxic chemical, diacetyl. Diacetyl is commonly used in the food flavoring industry to mimic the taste and texture of butter.

The Plaintiff, Tanu Vatuvei, worked with diacetyl on a daily basis for nearly ten years at an Orange County flavor manufacturing plant, Mission Flavors & Fragrances, Inc. By the age of 34, Mr. Vatuvei contracted bronchiolitis obliterans as a result of his exposure to diacetyl and he was left with only 40% of his lung function.

Today, Mr. Vatuvei is 38 and the disease has progressed to the point where it is difficult for him to get around without losing his breath. Mr. Vatuvei may need a lung transplant to save his life.

Citrus and Allied Essences, Ltd. supplied most of the diacetyl used at Mission's flavor manufacturing plant during the years Mr. Vatuvei worked there. Although Citrus was aware of the dangers of inhaling diacetyl vapors, they did nothing to warn Mr. Vatuvei or his employer until it was too late.

The jury found that Citrus knew of the serious health effects of inhaling diacetyl vapors and because Citrus failed to tell Mr. Vatuvei what they knew, the jury held the company responsible for Mr. Vatuvei's life altering disease. The jury also found Mission partly responsible for failing to provide a safer work environment.

[Jacob Plattenberger](#) of [TorHoerman Law](#) represented Mr. Vatuvei. The Honorable Gail A. Andler



TorHoerman Law is a national drug, medical device and toxic tort law firm representing clients in 50 states. We are not afraid to take on the largest companies when they put profits ahead of safety.

presided over the four-week trial.

"Tanu did nothing wrong, he simply went to work, day in and day out, without complaint, and for that, the defendants robbed him of a normal life by exposing him to toxic chemicals without his knowledge," said Mr. Plattenberger, trial attorney for Mr. Vatuvei.

Mr. Plattenberger continued, "The process of a trial is stressful. We have always believed that Tanu needed to focus his time and efforts on his health and his family. We know it was a hard decision for Tanu to turn down a settlement that would have saved him from four weeks of stress and public scrutiny. But, in the end, the jury agreed that the settlement offered was not in the best interest of Tanu. In fact, the jury awarded Tanu four times the final offer made by defendant, Citrus."

Tor Hoerman, managing attorney of TorHoerman Law, added, "We are grateful that the jury was so attentive during the four week trial and understood the importance of this trial for Tanu and his family. I am very proud of Jake and the entire team at TorHoerman Law. We have assembled a group of experienced people who continue to hold corporations responsible when they put profits ahead of safety, as in this case with Tanu's exposure to Diacetyl."

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