

Weitz & Luxenberg Attorney EricaRae Garcia Appointed to Hair Relaxer Products MDL Leadership

Burgeoning Litigation Affects Largely Black and Latina Women

NEW YORK CITY, NY, USA, March 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Attorney EricaRae Garcia of the law firm of [Weitz & Luxenberg P.C.](#) has been appointed to serve on the Plaintiffs' Steering Committee (PSC) in the multidistrict litigation (MDL) involving [hair relaxers](#) that cause ovarian and uterine cancer. The litigation alleges that using these chemical hair relaxers to straighten hair results in reproductive system cancers of the ovaries, uterus, and the endometrium, the lining of the uterus.

Ms. Garcia is part of Weitz & Luxenberg's Defective Drugs and Devices litigation practice area. She has been appointed along with a diverse group of other attorneys. The proposed large leadership structure was recommended because complex issues are likely to arise throughout the duration of the litigation and there are multiple different defendant manufacturers of the products.

"I am honored to be part of the leadership on this important litigation. My goal is to help women get compensation for the severe health situations they are facing, through no fault of their own," explains Ms. Garcia.



Attorney EricaRae Garcia



Cancerous hair products in this litigation affect many Black and Latina women.

At the end of January, the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation (JPML) heard arguments seeking the transfer of hair relaxer cases to a single federal district. Then, in early February, the JPML granted consolidation of these cases in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, with Judge Mary Rowland presiding. The leadership of the PSC was determined on March 3 by an order of the Court.

In November 2022, Weitz & Luxenberg began accepting cases of uterine and ovarian cancer linked to use of chemical hair relaxers. During December 2022, Ms. Garcia participated in the Mass Torts Made Perfect Webinar on the Chemical Hair Relaxer Litigation as a panelist.

In February of this year, Ms. Garcia presented at prominent litigation conference producer HarrisMartin's MDL Conference on hair straighteners. She spoke about recent studies linking the ingredients and chemicals in hair straightening and relaxing products to cancer.

"Many of our clients began using hair relaxers and straighteners at a young age," Ms. Garcia says. "For years, throughout adulthood, they continued to use these products. Just like members of my own family did."

Ms. Garcia continues, "What we've been learning through the studies is that chemical hair relaxers and straighteners contain multiple dangerous additives and chemicals. These toxic chemicals are known to be carcinogenic and can also disrupt a woman's hormones."

Both Black women and Latina women face the greatest risk of developing uterine, endometrial, and ovarian cancer. The reason — frequency of use. Some self-identified Black women have reported using chemical hair straightening and relaxing products more than four times a year.

Because of cultural norms, women who do not have naturally straight hair often feel the need to conform to these narrow standards of acceptability and beauty. Black women and Latinas not only tend to use these products more frequently, but also begin using them at an earlier age.

Many chemical hair straightening and relaxing products contain formaldehyde and formaldehyde-forming chemicals. Other dangerous ingredients include endocrine disrupting chemicals, phthalates, and parabens.

In and of themselves, these chemicals can be dangerous. Just by breathing them in, you can develop serious respiratory problems.

When you consider how these products are applied and activated, the dangers become even more apparent. The application of heat to increase absorption through the scalp may lead to burns and lesions.

Increased absorption can lead to increased risk of hormone disruption. Teens, pregnant women,

and salon workers are also at a higher risk.

Ms. Garcia is an integral part of the W&L team that intends to hold the manufacturers of chemical hair straightening and relaxing products accountable. She is helping to lead the fight against these companies for marketing and distributing potentially dangerous products to customers.

She points out, "You have the right to know if the products you are applying are not safe. Manufacturers must ensure their products are clearly labeled with all necessary precautions and warnings."

Ms. Garcia insists, "We are actively accepting cases for women who used these products and developed ovarian, uterine, or endometrial cancer. There are potentially hundreds of thousands of women across the country who were injured by chemical hair straightening and relaxing products. My goal is to help get justice for as many of you as I can."

The case is In re: Hair Relaxer Marketing Sales Practices and Products Liability Litigation in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division.

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David Kufeld

Weitz & Luxenberg P.C.

+1 2125585682

media@weitzlux.com

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