

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS
RICHARD SHEPPARD ARNOLD UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
500 WEST CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE D-469
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201-3325

KRISTINE G. BAKER
DISTRICT JUDGE

(501) 604-5420
FAX: (501) 604-5427

June 22, 2026

Re: **CARTIVA SYNTHETIC CARTILAGE IMPLANT PRODUCTS LIABILITY
LITIGATION**
MDL No. 3172 (4:26-md-03172-KGB)
ALL CASES

Dear Counsel:

The United States Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation (“Panel”) has transferred to this Court for centralized pretrial proceedings actions that concern alleged defects in the Cartiva Synthetic Cartilage Implant.

With this letter, I am providing notice that the Court intends to set a hearing to conduct an initial organizational meeting (“Hearing”). The Hearing will be set for **Wednesday, August 26, beginning at 1:30 p.m. CDT** in Courtroom 4D of the Richard Sheppard Arnold United States Courthouse in Little Rock, Arkansas, and counsel may appear by video conference.

Each party represented by counsel shall appear at the Hearing through his or her attorney, who will have primary responsibility for the parties’ interests in this litigation. However, to minimize costs and facilitate a manageable Hearing, parties with similar interests may agree to have an attending attorney represent their interest at the Hearing. A party will not, by so designating an attorney to represent his or her interests at the Hearing, be precluded from other representation during the litigation. Attendance at the Hearing will not waive objections to jurisdiction, venue, or service.

To the extent counsel is unable to attend the Hearing and cannot agree to have an attending attorney represent their interest at the Hearing, counsel should file a motion to continue the Hearing.

Prior to the Hearing, please email my chambers at KGBchambers@ared.uscourts.gov to inform courtroom deputy, Tracy Washington, that you plan to participate. Prior to the Hearing, the Court will provide call-in information to counsel who participate. We will ask all counsel to introduce themselves for the record at the start of the telephone conference.

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By prior Order, the Court requested that counsel for plaintiffs and counsel for defendants, to the extent they have not already done so, confer and seek consensus on the selection of a candidate for the position of liaison counsel for each group to serve as the primary contact person for the Court regarding administrative matters (Dkt. No. 5, ¶ 7). Liaison counsel shall be required to maintain complete files with copies of all documents served upon them and shall make such files available to other parties upon request. Liaison counsel are also authorized to receive orders and notices from the Panel pursuant to Rule 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Panel on behalf of all parties and shall be responsible for the preparation and transmittal of copies of such orders and notices to all parties.

If counsel for plaintiffs wish to propose a structure for the organization of plaintiffs' counsel, the Court would be happy to receive that proposal (no more than five pages) in advance of our Hearing. That proposal should address the need for liaison counsel in addition to lead counsel, the need for plaintiffs' steering committee, the proposed fee and compensation structure, and the need for liaison counsel as to related state cases, if any. Of course, other counsel may file similar proposals if they choose to do so, and the Court will consider all such proposals to make these determinations. Counsel for defendants should do the same, filing separately a proposal (no more than five pages) addressing these same matters for defendants. The deadline for submitting such proposals is Wednesday, August 19, 2026, and these proposals should be submitted only by email to KGBchambers@ared.uscourts.gov.

It also would be helpful to receive by Wednesday, August 19, 2026, a summary of the procedural posture of these various cases to the extent counsel are able to provide such a summary prior to this Hearing. I understand that some cases are very recently filed, while other cases are already well into discovery. The Court would like to receive information regarding the following: (1) the timing of any motions that need to be resolved in the cases, (2) a plan for discovery that avoids duplication to the extent possible but does not unduly delay the continued progress of the cases where discovery is underway, and (3) a summary of the protective orders currently in place and proposals for such orders going forward. In addition, to the extent counsel are able to provide it at this stage, the Court would like to receive a proposed schedule for conducting discovery and motion practice in these cases. Further, the Court would like for defendants to report whether they intend to file any motions to dismiss based on jurisdiction or service issues and whether defendants believe the appropriate parties have been named as defendants. One summary from each side, indicating areas of agreement, is preferred (no more than 10 pages). These documents will not be binding, will not waive claims or defenses, and may not be offered in evidence against a party in this or later proceedings. These summaries also should be submitted only by email to my chambers at KGBchambers@ared.uscourts.gov.

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The Court also requests that all counsel ensure that they have an email address on file on the Court's online docketing system.

I look forward to meeting with you at the Hearing. United States Magistrate Judge Patricia S. Harris may join our call and is assigned to this litigation with me. Tracy Washington, who serves as courtroom deputy, and Debra Williams and Devon Shewell, two of my law clerks, will be on the call, as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristine G. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristine G. Baker
Chief United States District Judge

KGB/tmw