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BREAKING: Daiichi, Forest Reach \$300M Settlement In Benicar MDL

By Jeannie O'Sullivan

Law360, New York (August 1, 2017, 11:30 AM EDT) -- Daiichi Sankyo Inc. and Forest Laboratories Inc. have agreed to pay \$300 million to settle claims in state and federal courts that the blood pressure drug Benicar caused gastrointestinal injuries, a plaintiffs' lawyer announced Tuesday.



Benicar manufacturer Daiichi Sankyo Inc. and Forest Laboratories Inc. agreed Tuesday to pay \$300 million to settle suits that claimed the drug was designed in a defective manner. (Getty)

Both sides signed a master settlement agreement Tuesday morning, the lawyer said during a conference before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler in New Jersey federal court in Camden.

"This is a team effort," attorney Adam Slater of Mazie Slater Katz & Freeman LLC, representing the plaintiffs, told the court.

The suits claimed Daiichi designed Benicar in a defective manner and failed to warn users that it could cause chronic diarrhea, nausea, malnutrition, dehydration and weight loss. Forest is accused of promoting Benicar alongside Daiichi.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned in 2013 that Benicar could cause a condition known as sprue-like enteropathy, which includes severe and chronic diarrhea. It mandated that the drug's warning labels be changed to include the condition.

At the time the FDA made its Benicar warning, it had identified 23 serious cases of late-onset diarrhea among users of the drug in its adverse event reporting system. About 1.9 million patients received a prescription for Benicar or a similar drug in 2012 alone, according to court documents.

In April 2015, the U.S. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation centralized 15 suits against Daiichi Sankyo and Forest Laboratories and transferred them to New Jersey federal court. The widespread use of the drug and the potential for more individual suits spread across multiple jurisdictions weighed in favor of centralization, plaintiffs had argued.

--Editing by Rebecca Flanagan.