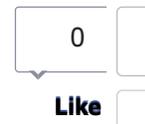


Ala. woman awarded \$9.45 million over Wyeth hormone drug



By [Miriam Hill](#) INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

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A Philadelphia jury yesterday ordered Pfizer Inc.'s Wyeth unit to pay \$9.45 million to an Alabama woman who claimed that the company's hormone-replacement drug caused her breast cancer.

The Common Pleas Court jury awarded \$3.25 million in compensatory damages and \$6 million in punitive damages to Audrey Singleton, a retired school-bus driver from Chatom, Ala. The verdict also included \$200,000 to Singleton's husband for loss of consortium.

Pfizer, which is based in New York, said it would appeal the decision.

"We believe that there is no basis in fact or law for either the liability verdict or punitive award in this case," the company said.

Singleton's lawyer, Esther Berezofsky, said she was pleased with the jury decision.

"We have consistently established Wyeth's liability in these cases, and we strongly believe that this verdict as well as the others in favor of plaintiffs will be upheld on appeal," said Berezofsky, whose firm has offices in Philadelphia and Cherry Hill.

She said her client's cancer has been in remission.

More than six million women took the pills to treat symptoms such as hot flashes and mood swings before a 2002 study highlighted the drugs' links to cancer.

Until 1995, many patients combined Premarin, Wyeth's estrogen-based drug, with progestin-laden Provera, made by Pfizer's Pharmacia & Upjohn unit. Wyeth combined the two hormones in Prempro.

New York-based Pfizer, the world's largest drugmaker, completed its \$68 billion purchase of Wyeth last year.

About 8,000 people who used Pfizer's and Wyeth's hormone-replacement drugs filed suit against the company. Hundreds of the lawsuits are filed in Philadelphia because of Wyeth's large presence in the region.

Including yesterday's verdict, Pfizer has lost seven of 10 cases that have gone to juries. Two of the jury verdicts were reversed posttrial, and others are being challenged on appeal, Pfizer spokesman Chris



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Loder said.

Wyeth also has won five summary judgments on Prempro cases, and 15 of its cases set for trial have been voluntarily dismissed by plaintiffs.

Singleton, a mother of three, began taking Prempro in August 1997. Results of a mammogram at that time were normal, her lawyers said during the trial. She stopped taking the drug in January 2004 after her breast cancer diagnosis.

Lawyers for Pfizer argued during the trial that Singleton learned in July 2002 of the risks associated with the drug. Her prescribing physician suggested she stay on the medicine, Pfizer said.

Contact staff writer Miriam Hill at 215-854-5520 or hillmb@phillynews.com.

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