

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

**STATE OF OHIO, ex rel.
DAVE YOST,
ATTORNEY GENERAL
30 East Broad St., 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215**

Plaintiff,

VS.

BOSTON SCIENTIFIC CORPORATION
300 Boston Scientific Way
Marlborough, MA 01752-1234

Defendant.

[illegible]

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT,
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, CIVIL
PENALTIES, AND COSTS**

NOW COMES the Plaintiff, the State of Ohio, by and through the Attorney General of Ohio, Dave Yost, and his Consumer Protection Section, bringing this action to enjoin Defendant Boston Scientific Corporation from engaging in deceptive acts or practices in the course of offering and selling consumer goods and services, in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, Ohio Rev. Code 1345.01 et seq. and to obtain relief for consumers as a result of Defendant's unfair or deceptive acts and practices

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff is the State of Ohio, by and through the Attorney General of Ohio, Dave Yost, and his Consumer Protection Section, who brings this action in the public interest on behalf of the state of Ohio and who is charged with, among other things, enforcing and seeking redress for violations of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq.

2. Defendant Boston Scientific Corporation (“Boston Scientific”) is a Delaware corporation headquartered at 300 Boston Scientific Way, Marlborough, MA 01752-1234.

3. At all times relevant hereto, Defendant Boston Scientific transacted business in the State of Ohio and nationwide by marketing, promoting, advertising, offering for sale, selling, and distributing transvaginal surgical mesh devices.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. Plaintiff, State of Ohio, by and through the Attorney General of Ohio, Dave Yost, and his Consumer Protection Section, having reasonable cause to believe that violations of Ohio’s consumer laws have occurred, brings this action in the public interest and on behalf of the State of Ohio under the authority vested in him pursuant to R.C. 1345.07 of the Consumer Sales Practices Act.

5. The actions of Defendant, hereinafter described, have occurred in the State of Ohio, in Franklin County, and other various counties, and as set forth below, are in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq.

6. Jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action lies with this Court pursuant to R.C. 1345.04 of the Consumer Sales Practices Act.

7. Venue is proper in accordance with Ohio Civ. R. 3(C), because some of the transactions complained of herein and out of which this action arose, occurred in Franklin County.

8. Defendant is a “supplier” as that term is defined in R.C. 1345.01(C) as Defendant was, at all times relevant herein, engaged in the business of effecting “consumer transactions” by manufacturing, marketing, promoting, advertising, offering for sale, and selling, medical devices, including transvaginal surgical mesh devices, in the State of Ohio for purposes that were primarily for personal, family or household use within the meaning specified in R.C. 1345.01(A) and (D).

BACKGROUND

9. “Surgical Mesh,” as used in this Complaint, is a medical device that contains synthetic polypropylene mesh intended to be implanted in the pelvic floor to treat stress urinary incontinence (SUI) and/or pelvic organ prolapse (POP) manufactured and sold by Boston Scientific in the United States.

10. SUI and POP are common conditions that pose lifestyle limitations and are not life-threatening.

11. SUI is a leakage of urine during episodes of physical activity that increase abdominal pressure, such as coughing, sneezing, laughing, or exercising. SUI can happen when pelvic tissues and muscles supporting the bladder and urethra become weak and allow the neck of the bladder to descend during bursts of physical activity, and the descent can prevent the urethra from working properly to control the flow of urine. SUI can also result when the sphincter muscle that controls the urethra weakens and is not able to stop the flow of urine under normal circumstances and with an increase in abdominal pressure.

12. POP happens when the tissue and muscles of the pelvic floor fail to support the pelvic organs resulting in the drop of the pelvic organs from their normal position. Not all women with POP have symptoms, while some experience pelvic discomfort or pain, pressure, and other symptoms.

13. In addition to addressing symptoms, such as wearing absorbent pads, there are a variety of non-surgical and surgical treatment options to address SUI and POP. Non-surgical options for SUI include pelvic floor exercises, pessaries, transurethral bulking agents, and behavior modifications. Surgery for SUI can be done through the vagina or abdomen to provide support for the urethra or bladder neck with either stitches alone, tissue removed from other parts of the body,

tissue from another person, or with material such as surgical mesh, which is permanently implanted. Non-surgical options for POP include pelvic floor exercises and pessaries. Surgery for POP can be done through the vagina or abdomen using stitches alone or with the addition of surgical mesh.

14. Boston Scientific marketed and sold Surgical Mesh devices to be implanted transvaginally for the treatment of POP for approximately 10 years or more. Boston Scientific ceased the sale of Surgical Mesh devices to be implanted transvaginally for the treatment of POP after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ordered manufacturers of such products to cease the sale and distribution of the products in April 2019.

15. Boston Scientific began marketing and selling Surgical Mesh devices to be implanted transvaginally for the treatment of SUI by 2003, and continues to market and sell Surgical Mesh devices to be implanted transvaginally for the treatment of SUI.

16. The FDA applies different levels of scrutiny to medical devices before approving or clearing them for sale.

17. The most rigorous level of scrutiny is the premarket approval (PMA) process, which requires a manufacturer to submit detailed information to the FDA regarding the safety and effectiveness of its device.

18. The 510(k) review is a much less rigorous process than the PMA review process. Under this process, a manufacturer is exempt from the PMA process and instead provides premarket notification to the FDA that a medical device is “substantially equivalent” to a legally marketed device. While PMA approval results in a finding of safety and effectiveness based on the manufacturer’s submission and any other information before the FDA, 510(k) clearance occurs

after a finding of substantial equivalence to a legally marketed device. The 510(k) process is focused on equivalence, not safety.

19. Boston Scientific's SUI and POP Surgical Mesh devices entered the market under the 510(k) review process. Boston Scientific marketed and sold Surgical Mesh devices without adequate testing.

BOSTON SCIENTIFIC'S COURSE OF CONDUCT

20. In marketing Surgical Mesh devices, Boston Scientific misrepresented and failed to disclose the full range of risks and complications associated with the devices, including misrepresenting the risks of Surgical Mesh as compared with the risks of other surgeries or surgically implantable materials.

21. Boston Scientific misrepresented the safety of its Surgical Mesh by misrepresenting the risks of its Surgical Mesh, thereby making false and/or misleading representations about its risks.

22. Boston Scientific also made material omissions when it failed to disclose the risks of its Surgical Mesh.

23. Boston Scientific misrepresented and/or failed to adequately disclose serious risks and complications of one or more of its transvaginally-placed Surgical Mesh products, including the following:

- a. heightened risk of infection;
- b. rigid scar plate formation;
- c. mesh shrinkage;
- d. voiding dysfunction;
- e. de novo incontinence;
- f. urinary tract infection;

- g. risk of delayed occurrence of complications; and
- h. defecatory dysfunction.

24. Throughout its marketing of Surgical Mesh, Boston Scientific continually failed to disclose risks and complications it knew to be inherent in the devices and/or misrepresented those inherent risks and complications as caused by physician error, surgical technique, or perioperative risks.

25. In 2008, the FDA issued a Public Health Notification to inform doctors and patients about serious complications associated with surgical mesh placed through the vagina to treat POP or SUI. In 2011, the FDA issued a Safety Communication to inform doctors and patients that serious complications associated with surgical mesh for the transvaginal repair of POP are not rare, and that a systematic review of published literature showed that transvaginal POP repair with mesh does not improve symptomatic results or quality of life over traditional non-mesh repair and that mesh used in transvaginal POP repair introduces risks not present in traditional non-mesh surgery for POP repair.

26. In 2012, the FDA ordered post-market surveillance studies by manufacturers of surgical mesh to address specific safety and effectiveness concerns related to surgical mesh used for the transvaginal repair of POP. In 2016, the FDA issued final orders to reclassify transvaginal POP devices as Class III (high risk) devices and to require manufacturers to submit a PMA application to support the safety and effectiveness of surgical mesh for the transvaginal repair of POP in order to continue marketing the devices.

27. In April 2019, the FDA ordered manufacturers of surgical mesh devices intended for transvaginal repair of POP to cease the sale and distribution of those products in the United States. The FDA determined that Boston Scientific had not demonstrated a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness for these devices under the PMA standard. On or around April 16, 2019, Boston

Scientific announced it would stop global sales of its transvaginal mesh products indicated for POP.

VIOLATIONS OF THE CONSUMER SALES PRACTICES ACT

COUNT I

28. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs 1 through 27 as if they were set out at length herein.

29. In the course of marketing, promoting, selling, and distributing Surgical Mesh products, Boston Scientific committed unfair and deceptive acts and practices by making false statements about, misrepresenting, and/or making other representations about the risks of Surgical Mesh products that had the effect, capacity, or tendency, of deceiving or misleading consumers, in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.02(A).

30. The acts or practices described above have been previously determined by Ohio courts to violate the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq. Defendant committed said violations after such decisions were available for public inspection pursuant to R.C. 1345.05(A)(3).

COUNT II

31. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs 1 through 27 as if they were set out at length herein.

32. In the course of marketing, promoting, selling, and distributing Surgical Mesh products, Boston Scientific committed unfair and deceptive acts and practices by making representations concerning the characteristics, uses, benefits, and/or qualities of Surgical Mesh products that they did not have, in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 134502(B)(1).

33. The acts or practices described above have been previously determined by Ohio courts to violate the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq. Defendant committed said violations after such decisions were available for public inspection pursuant to R.C. 1345.05(A)(3).

COUNT III

34. Plaintiff realleges and incorporates by reference each and every allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs 1 through 27 as if they were set out at length herein.

35. In the course of marketing, promoting, selling, and distributing Surgical Mesh products, Boston Scientific made material omissions concerning the risks and complications associated with Surgical Mesh products, and those material omissions had the effect, capacity, or tendency of deceiving consumers, in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.02(A).

36. The acts or practices described above have been previously determined by Ohio courts to violate the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq. Defendant committed said violations after such decisions were available for public inspection pursuant to R.C. 1345.05(A)(3).

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court:

1. Adjudge and decree that Defendant has engaged in the acts or practices complained of herein, and that such constitute unfair and/or deceptive acts or practices in violation of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, R.C. 1345.01 et seq., as previously set forth;

2. Permanently enjoin Defendant, its agents, employees, and all other persons and entities, corporate or otherwise, in active concert or participation with any of them, from engaging in unfair or deceptive trade practices in the marketing, promoting, selling and distributing of Defendant's

Surgical Mesh devices;

3. Assess, fine, and impose upon the Defendant a civil penalty pursuant to R.C. 1345.07(D) of \$25,000 for each unfair or deceptive practice alleged herein;
4. Order Defendant to pay all reasonable costs and attorney's fees for the prosecution and investigation of this action;
5. Order the Defendant pay court costs in this matter;
6. Grant Plaintiff such other and further relief as the Court may deem just, equitable, and appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Yost
Attorney General

/s/ Teresa A. Heffernan
TERESA A. HEFFERNAN (0080732)
Section Counsel
Office of the Ohio Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section
30 East Broad Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 644-9618
(866) 521-9921 (fax)
Teresa.Heffernan@ohioattorneygeneral.gov

MICHAEL S. ZIEGLER (0042206)
Principal Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Ohio Attorney General
Consumer Protection Section
30 East Broad Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 644-9618
(866) 404-4121 (fax)
Michael.Ziegler@ohioattorneygeneral.gov

Counsel for Plaintiff State of Ohio