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Pfizer Praises Passage Of New Alabama Legislation Says Bill Protects Incentives to Innovate and Develop

New Medicines

NEW YORK, N.Y., April 30 - Pfizer's Wyeth subsidiary today issued the following statement praising a new bill passed in the Alabama legislature that effectively overturns the state Supreme Court's decision in Weeks v. Wyeth, et al. by establishing that a manufacturer cannot be held liable for a product it did not manufacture or market. In Weeks, Alabama's high court accepted in 2013 and later reaffirmed in 2014 the so-called "innovator liability" theory, holding that a pharmaceutical company can be liable for injuries allegedly caused by generic products it did not manufacture or market. The Weeks ruling stood in conflict with the decisions of nearly every other court across the country to rule on this question.

"We are pleased that the Alabama Legislature moved swiftly to protect innovation by overturning an aberrant legal ruling that threatened to make brand-name manufacturers perpetually liable for injuries linked to the use of their competitors' products. We applaud the leadership of the state legislators and commend their commitment to policies that promote research and development, as well as the health and welfare of the people of Alabama. We also commend Governor Bentley, who has indicated his intent to sign the bill, for his support."

Nearly every court that has considered the issue since the Alabama Supreme Court's initial decision has rejected the assertion that brand-name drug manufacturers can be liable for injuries caused by a plaintiff's ingestion of a generic drug product. Thirty seven other courts have rejected the Alabama Supreme Court's reasoning since its ruling, including the Iowa Supreme Court and the seven federal courts of appeals to have addressed the issue. Overall, 108 decisions applying the laws of 30 different states - including every state that borders Alabama - have rejected the "innovator liability" theory.

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