

Family of opioid-addicted baby sues pharmaceutical companies

Cancer claims on Monsanto's Roundup gets judge's scrutiny

SAN FRANCISCO, March 6, (AP) — Claims that the active ingredient in the widely used weed killer Roundup can cause cancer have been evaluated by international agencies, US and foreign regulators and the product's manufacturer — agribusiness giant Monsanto.

Now, a federal judge in San Francisco is conducting his own review during an unusual set of court hearings that began Monday. It has big stakes for Monsanto and hundreds of farmers and others who have sued the company.

US District Judge Vince Chhabria will spend a week hearing from experts to help decide whether there is valid scientific evidence to support the lawsuits' claim that exposure to Roundup can cause non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Chhabria is presiding over more than 300 lawsuits against Monsanto Co by cancer victims and their families who say the company long knew about Roundup's cancer risk but failed to warn them.

The plaintiffs must first persuade Chhabria, however, that he should allow their epidemiologists and other doctors to testify to a jury that Roundup can cause cancer. Many regulators have rejected the link, and Monsanto vehemently denies it and says hundreds of studies have found glyphosate — Roundup's active ingredient — is safe.

The plaintiffs' first witness was Beate Ritz, an epidemiologist at the

Big Tobacco must be 'held accountable': Bloomberg

PARIS, March 6, (AFP) — Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, who made his fortune selling financial data, has given more than a billion dollars since 2007 to curb global tobacco use, which claims nearly seven million lives every year.

Along with World Health Organization (WHO) director Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and South African health minister Aaron Motsoaledi, Bloomberg will launch the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town on March 7.

Question: What is your long-term vision for the global fight against tobacco?

Answer: If we could completely eliminate tobacco use today, it would prevent nearly one billion early deaths this century. Ten years ago, one billion people were covered by a high-quality tobacco law, such as graphic health warnings and bans on indoor smoking.

Today, five billion people are. That progress has saved an estimated 35 million lives.

The bad news is, as more cities and countries pass these laws,

with glyphosate as the surrounding weeds die.

But the herbicide came under increasing scrutiny after the International Agency for Research on Cancer, based in Lyon, France — part of the World Health Organization — classified it as a "probable human carcinogen" in 2015. A flurry of lawsuits against Monsanto in federal and state courts followed, and California added glyphosate to its list of chemicals known to cause cancer.

Christine Sheppard, among those

least widespread of all the proven tobacco control policies.

Q: Many countries collect huge amounts of money from tobacco tax revenues. China, for example, collects a trillion yuan (about \$150 billion, 120 billion euros) annually. Does this not create a perverse incentive to maintain tobacco sales, even in the face of tobacco's terrible health toll — a million deaths a year in China?

A: The revenues that countries collect from tobacco taxes pale in comparison to the costs imposed on society by smoking.

The lawsuit states that a baby, identified by his initials T.W.B., was born in March 2017 and diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, which can cause breathing and feeding problems. The lawsuit says baby T.W.B. spent his first days in "excruciating pain" as he weaned from an opioid addiction inherited from his mother, the Belleville News-Democrat reported.

The baby's grandparents, **Deric and Ceonda Rees**, filed the lawsuit in the US District Court of Southern Illinois Wednesday. Ceonda Rees declined the newspaper's request for comment.

David Levine, an expert in federal court procedure at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.

Monsanto developed glyphosate in the 1970s, and the weed killer is now sold in more than 160 countries. Farmers in California use it on more than 200 types of crops. Homeowners use it to keep their lawns and gardens pristine.

St Louis-based Monsanto also sells seeds genetically modified to produce crops that can tolerate being sprayed

people can use," said Sheppard, who now lives near San Diego.

Monsanto has attacked the international research agency's opinion as an outlier. The US Environmental Protection Agency says glyphosate is safe for humans when used in accordance with label directions. A draft report by the agency last year concluded the herbicide is not likely to be carcinogenic to humans. The report noted science reviews by numerous other countries as well as a 2017 National Institute of Health survey had reached the same conclusion.

Also:

BELLEVILLE, Ill.: An Illinois family of a baby born addicted to opioids is suing 20 pharmaceutical companies alleging they're responsible for the mother's addiction to opioids and heroin.

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