

Pfizer Accused of Covid-19 Vaccine Patent Infringement Again, This Time by Arbutus and Genevant

2023-04-13

Arbutus has accused Pfizer and BioNTech of infringing its lipid nanoparticle technology patents in developing their blockbuster mRNA Covid-19 vaccine.

While [Arbutus](#) and [Genevant Sciences](#) (partially owned by Arbutus and Vivek Ramaswamy's Roivant) acknowledged that Pfizer and BioNTech created and manufactured their vaccine "at a speed unprecedented in the history of medicine," the plaintiffs argued in a lawsuit filed Tuesday that the feat wouldn't have been possible without technology invented by Arbutus scientists "years before."

The companies are seeking damages for the alleged infringement of five patents relating to the composition, manufacturing, delivery and use of nucleic acid-lipid particles. The news comes more than a year after the plaintiffs filed similar claims against Moderna in Delaware federal court.

Because mRNA is inherently large and unstable, currently-approved Covid-19 vaccines deploy bubbles of fat called lipid nanoparticles to protect the molecule and escort it across the cell membrane. Once inside the cell, lipid nanoparticles unpack mRNA's essential protein-building instructions to create, for example, coronavirus spike proteins.

"Before Arbutus's scientists tackled the manufacturing challenges, methods of manufacturing LNPs for RNA employed harsh conditions that would damage the RNA that the LNPs were supposed to protect," the complaint states, alleging that neither BioNTech nor Pfizer sought a license to use Arbutus and Genevant's technology for a Covid-19 vaccine.

"They just used the technologies without paying for them—keeping for themselves tens of

billions in revenue that would never have existed were it not for Plaintiffs' innovation," the complaint continues.

The suit marks the latest in a string of court battles over Covid-19 vaccine intellectual property. Last March, Pfizer and BioNTech's partner and LNP developer Acuitas filed suit against Arbutus and Genevant, arguing that the companies had "nothing to do" with the success of Pfizer and BioNTech's brand name vaccine Comirnaty.

"Arbutus and Genevant seek the benefits flowing from Comirnaty without having borne any of the burden of developing it. Their claim to rights in— and payment for— Comirnaty is baseless," Acuitas added in their filing.

Meanwhile, Delaware federal judge Mitchell Goldberg refused to toss Arbutus' case against Moderna back in March, and Pfizer and partner BioNTech are also battling Moderna in court. BioNTech declined to comment, while Pfizer was unavailable for immediate comment. "Arbutus remains committed to taking all legal actions necessary to defend and protect its intellectual property," the company said in a [news release](#).

Read the [original article](#) on Endpoints News.