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ATTORNEYS RANDY NASH AND JASON SCOBY PUBLISH ARTICLE IN ABA'S HEALTH LAW LITIGATION NEWSLETTER

Randy Nash and Jason Scoby recently published an article in the Spring/Summer 2010 edition of the American Bar Association's *Health Law Litigation newsletter* entitled "New Rules Dramatically Affect Health Care Expert Witness Disclosures."

The article discusses the existing Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and a proposed change to Rule 26 involving the disclosure of expert witness draft reports and communications between the attorney and an expert witness in a case. This proposed rule change has the potential to impact expert witness disclosures before the federal courts. It is expected to go into effect on December 1, 2010.

Under the current rule, an expert witness's entire file with regard to the matter in litigation, including any drafts of the expert's report and any communications with the attorney, is discoverable by the opponent in the lawsuit.

The Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure has recommended that the current rule be amended, stating that the rule has caused "significant practical problems." The Committee described the problem as follows:

> Lawyers and experts take elaborate steps to avoid creating any discoverable record and at the same time take elaborate steps to attempt to discover the other side's drafts and communications. The artificial and wasteful discovery-avoidance practices include lawyers hiring two sets of experts—one for consultation, to do the work and develop the opinions, and one to provide the testimony—to avoid creating a discoverable record of the collaborative interaction with the experts. The practices also include tortuous steps to avoid having an expert take any notes, make any record of preliminary analyses or opinions, or produce any draft report. Instead, the only record is a single, final report.

Recognizing these issues, many have sought to change the discovery rules. The proposed amendment to Rule 26 attempts to avoid disclosure of experts' draft reports and

attorney/expert communications. The goal is to permit the attorney to communicate freely with the expert about the attorney's thoughts and opinions relating to the case without fear of those communications being discovered by opposing counsel. The Rule also aims to avoid the unnecessary costs caused by hiring multiple experts and to prevent attorneys from taking other intricate maneuvers to evade the discovery of communications or drafts of expert opinions.

The Supreme Court recently approved these amendments to Rule 26 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. It is expected that Congress will approve the amended Rule, and if it does, the amended Rule 26 will go into effect on December 1, 2010. A full copy of "New Rules Dramatically Affect Health Care Expert Witness Disclosures" can be found here.