

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

CARLOS O. NESBETH, AMIT)
GODAMBE, JENNY GALLERY,)
MISTY HOWELL and MICAH)
WEBB, individually and on behalf of)
all others similarly situated,)

CIVIL ACTION NO.:
2:21-cv-01444-PD

Plaintiffs,)

v.)

ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH, LLC,)
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF)
ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH, LLC,)
THE 401(K) PLAN COMMITTEE)
OF ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH,)
LLC and JOHN DOES 1-30.)

Defendants.

**PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION FOR AN AWARD OF ATTORNEYS’ FEES AND
REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES AND A LEAD PLAINTIFF
CASE CONTRIBUTION AWARD**

Named Plaintiffs Carlos O. Nesbeth, Amit Godambe, Jenny Gallery, Misty Howell and Micah Webb (collectively, “Plaintiffs”), participants in the ICON Clinical Research, LLC 401(k) Plan (the “Plan”) hereby respectfully move this Court, pursuant to FED. R. CIV. P. 23, for an Order:

1. Granting class counsel attorneys’ fees in the amount of \$316,635.00 which represents 33 1/3% of the settlement amount;

2. Directing reimbursement to Class Counsel in the amount of \$14,882.60 of expenses incurred in the prosecution of the action;

3. Awarding case contribution award of \$10,000.00 to each of the five Named Plaintiffs (Carlos O. Nesbeth, Amit Godambe, Jenny Gallery, Misty Howell and Micah Webb); and

4. For such other relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

A proposed form of Order is submitted hereto.

The grounds for this Motion are set forth in the following documents filed contemporaneously herewith:

A. Memorandum of Law in Support of Plaintiffs' Motion For Award of Attorneys' Fees and Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards;

B. Declaration of Mark K. Gyandoh in Support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Final Approval of Settlement and In Support of Motion for An Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses and Case Contribution Awards for the Class Representatives;

C. Declaration of Named Plaintiff Carlos O. Nesbeth In Support of Motion for Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs;

D. Declaration of Named Plaintiff Amit Godambe In Support of Motion for Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs;

E. Declaration of Named Plaintiff Jenny Gallery In Support of Motion for Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs;

F. Declaration of Named Plaintiff Misty Howell In Support of Motion for Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs.; and

G. Declaration of Named Plaintiff Micah Webb In Support of Motion for Award of Attorneys' Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses, and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs.

Dated: May 12, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

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Class Counsel

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 12, 2022, a true and correct copy of the foregoing document was filed with the Court utilizing its ECF system, which will send notice of such filing to all counsel of record.

By: Mark K. Gyandoh
Mark K. Gyandoh, Esq.

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WEBB, individually and on behalf of)
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OF ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH,)
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Defendants.

**MEMORANDUM OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS CARLOS O.
NESBETH, AMIT GODAMBE, JENNY GALLERY, MISTY HOWELL,
AND MICAH WEBB’S MOTION FOR AN AWARD OF ATTORNEYS’
FEES AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES AND CASE
CONTRIBUTION AWARDS TO THE NAMED PLAINTIFFS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiffs Carlos O. Nesbeth, Amit Godambe, Jenny Gallery, Misty Howell, and Micah Webb (collectively, “Plaintiffs”), participants in the ICON Clinical Research, LLC 401(k) Plan (the “Plan”), submit this Memorandum of Law in support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for An Award of Attorneys’ Fees and Reimbursement of Expenses and Lead Plaintiff Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs. Plaintiffs file this Memorandum of Law at the same time as their Memorandum of Law In Support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement,¹ Certification of Settlement Class, and Approval of Plan of Allocation (the “Final Approval Memorandum”). Plaintiffs herein request an award of attorneys’ fees in the amount of \$316,635.00 which represents 33 1/3% of the Class Settlement Amount of \$950,000.00. Courts have permitted counsel fees ranging anywhere from nineteen (19) to forty-five (45) percent of the settlement fund. In fact, courts routinely support counsel fees of 33 1/3% in analogous class actions advanced under

¹ The Settlement Agreement is attached as Exhibit 1 to the Declaration of Mark K. Gyandoh in Support of Plaintiff’s Unopposed Motions for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement, Certification of Settlement Class, and Approval of Plan of Allocation and for an Award of Attorneys’ Fees, Reimbursement of Expenses and Case Contribution Awards to the Named Plaintiffs (the “Gyandoh Declaration” or “Gyandoh Decl.”) which further discusses the extensive efforts of Class Counsel in achieving this excellent result. The provisions of the Settlement Agreement, including all definitions and defined terms, are incorporated by reference herein. Thus, all capitalized terms not otherwise defined in this memorandum shall have the same meaning ascribed to them in the Settlement Agreement.

ERISA.² In addition, Plaintiffs request reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs and expenses incurred in connection with the prosecution of this Action in the amount of \$14,882.60. Class Counsel also ask the Court to approve the payment of Case Contribution Awards in the amount of \$10,000.00 each to the four Named Plaintiffs in recognition of their contributions to this Action.

II. ARGUMENT

A. Standard of Review

Plaintiffs’ attorneys in a class action may petition the court for compensation for any award to the class resulting from the attorneys’ efforts. *See, e.g., Boeing Co. v. Van Gemert*, 440 U.S. 472 (1980). Under FED. R. CIV. P. 23, “the court may award reasonable attorney’s fees and nontaxable costs that are authorized by law or by the Parties’ agreement.” FED. R. CIV. P. 23(h). Courts utilize two main approaches in

² *See e.g. Pinnell v. Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.*, No. 2:19-cv-05738-MAK (E.D. Pa.); *Hay v. Gucci America, Inc.*, No. 17-cv-7148 (D.N.J.); *Spano v. Boeing Co.*, No. 06-cv-0743 (S.D. Ill.); *Kennedy v. ABB, Inc.*, No. 06-cv- 4305 (W.D. Mo.); *Diebold et al v. Northern Trust Investments N.A. et al*, No. 09-cv-1934 (N.D. Ill.); *Nolte v. Cigna Corp.*, No. 07-cv-2046 (C.D. Ill.); *Kruger v. Novant Health, Inc.*, No. 14- cv-0208 (M.D.N.C.); *Gordan v. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.*, No. 13-cv-30184 (D. Mass.); *Beesley v. International Paper Co.*, No. 06-cv-0703 (S.D. Ill.); *Krueger v. Ameriprise Financial, Inc.*, No. 11-cv-2781 (D. Minn.); *Martin v. Caterpillar, Inc.*, No. 07-cv-1009 (C.D. Ill.); *Will v. General Dynamics*, No. 06-cv-0698 (S.D. Ill.); *Cassell v. Vanderbilt Univ.*, No. 16-cv-2086 (M.D. Tenn.); *Kelly v. The Johns Hopkins Univ.*, No. 16-cv-2835 (D. Md.); *Bilewicz v. FMR, LLC*, No. 13-cv-10636 (D. Mass.); *Terranza v. Safeway, Inc.*, No. 16-cv-03994 (N.D. Cal.); *Stevens v. SEI Investments Co.*, No. 18-cv-4205 (E.D. Pa.); *Schapker v. Waddell & Reed Fin., Inc.*, No., 17-cv-2365 (D. Kan.); *Donald v. Teachers Insurance and Annuity Insurance Association of America*, No. 15-cv-08040 (S.D.N.Y.); *Pease v. Jackson National Life Ins. Co.*, No. 17-cv-284 (W.D. Mich.); *Dennard v. Transamerica Corp.*, No., 15-cv-00030 (N.D. Iowa); *Price v. Eaton Vance Corp.*, 18-cv-12098 (D. Mass.); *Schultz v. Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P.*, No. 126-cv-1346 (E.D. Mo.); *Anderson v. Principal Life Insurance Co., et al.*, No. 15-cv-00119 (S.D. Iowa).

analyzing a request for attorneys' fees by class counsel: the "percentage of the fund" method and the "lodestar" method. *Johnston v. Comerica Mortg. Corp.*, 83 F.3d 241, 244 (8th Cir. 1996). Under the percentage-of-recovery method, "the court awards counsel a percentage of the amount recovered for the class in order to reward counsel for their success or penalize them for their failure." *Local 56, United Food and Commercial Workers Union v. Campbell Soup Co.*, 954 F.Supp. 1000, 1003 (D. N.J. 1997) (citing *Blum v. Stenson*, 465 U.S. 886, 900 n. 16 (1984)). The lodestar method, on the other hand, "calculates fees by multiplying the number of hours expended by some hourly rate appropriate for the region and for the experience of the lawyer." *In re General Motors Corp. ("GMC") Pick-Up Truck Fuel Tank Products Liability Litig.*, 55 F.3d 768, n. 37 (3d 1995). The Third Circuit favors the percentage-of-recovery method. *Local 56*, 954 F.Supp. at 1003 (citing *GMC*, 55 F.3d at 821-22).

Percentage approaches are the standard contingent-fee arrangements in non-class action cases, and thus, the percentage approach best emulates the real-world market value of attorney's services provided on a contingent basis, and properly align the interests of the attorney and the client in achieving the maximum recovery in shortest possible time. *See Steiner v. Hercules Inc.*, 835 F.Supp. 771, 792 (D.Del. 1993) ("The percentage method is widely used in the legal marketplace in contingent fee agreements and better reflects what a client, at the outset of the litigation, is

willing to pay.”) (internal citations omitted). As such, district courts across the Third Circuit have awarded fees based on the percentage-of-the-fund method.³ Moreover, the “lodestar method is difficult to apply, time-consuming to administer, inconsistent in result, and capable of manipulation” and “creates inherent incentive to prolong the litigation until sufficient hours have been expended.” MANUAL FOR COMPLEX LITIGATION (Fourth) § 14.121 (2004); *see also Vizcaino v. Microsoft Corp.*, 290 F.3d 1043, 1050 n.5 (9th Cir. 2002) (“[I]t is widely recognized that the lodestar method creates incentives for counsel to expend more hours than may be necessary on litigating a case so as to recover a reasonable fee”); *In re First Fidelity Bancorporation Securities Litig.*, 750 F.Supp.160, 162 (D.N.J. 1990) (“Requiring the court to calculate the number of hours devoted by counsel and evaluate the services rendered is unrealistically burdensome and time-consuming.”). Applying the percentage-of-recovery method reveals the fee award here is fair and reasonable.

³ *In re U.S. Bioscience Securities Litig.*, 155 F.R.D. 116, 118 (E.D.Pa. 1994) (number of lawyers representing the class (34) is irrelevant in the percentage approach); *Sala v. National R.R. Passenger Corp.*, 128 F.R.D. 210, 214 (E.D. Pa. 1989) (court should apply percentage-of-recovery method in common fund cases when there “are no circumstances suggesting its application would be unjust”); *In re Unisys Corp. Retiree Medical Benefits ERISA Litig.*, 886 F.Supp. 445, 460 (E.D. Pa. 1995) (same); *In re TSO Financial Litig.*, No. CIV.A. 87-7903 et al, 1989 WL 80316, at *6 (E.D. Pa. July 17, 1989); *In re First Fidelity Bancorporation Securities Litig.*, 750 F.Supp. 160 (D.N.J. 1990) (same); *In re SmithKline Beckman Corp. Securities Litig.*, 751 F.Supp. 525, 533 (E.D. Pa. 1990) (same); *In re GNC Shareholder Litig.*, 668 F.Supp. 450, 451-52 (W.D. Pa. 1987) (same).

B. A Fee Equal to 33-1/3% of the Common Settlement Fund is Fair and Reasonable

The Settlement provides Class Counsel's fees will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. Settlement at § 1.4. The Supreme Court of the United States recognizes, "a lawyer who recovers a common fund for the benefit of persons other than himself or his client is entitled to a reasonable attorney's fee from the fund as a whole." *Boeing Co. v. Van Gemert*, 444 U.S. 472, 478 (1980) (internal citations omitted). The guiding principle for determining the amount of a fee award in a common-fund case is the fee should be "reasonable." *In re Prudential Ins. Co. America Sales Practice Litig. Agent Actions*, 148 F.3d 283, 332-333 (3d Cir. 1998).

The value of the Settlement in this case is a Settlement Fund of \$950,000.00, with no possibility the amount reverts in any way to Defendants.⁴ Class Counsel seek an award of attorneys' fees of 33-1/3% of the Gross Settlement Amount, or \$316,635.00, plus reasonable expenses in the sum of \$14,882.60. Due to "the potential conflict of interest between the attorneys seeking compensation" and the clients, "the trial court has an independent duty to scrutinize fee applications." *Cunningham v. City of McKeesport*, 753 F.2d 262, 267 (3d Cir. 1985). Courts have permitted counsel fees ranging anywhere from nineteen (19) to forty-five (45)

⁴ Any Net Settlement Amount remaining in the Qualified Settlement Fund after payments are made to Class Members shall be paid to the Plan to defray administrative fees and expenses.

percent of the settlement fund. In fact, courts routinely support counsel fees of 33 1/3% in analogous class actions advanced under ERISA.⁵

In awarding fees using the percentage-of-recovery method in common fund cases, the Third Circuit instructed district courts to consider the following:

Among other things, these factors include: (1) the size of the fund created and the number of persons benefitted; (2) the presence or absence of substantial objections by members of the class to the settlement terms and/or fees requested by counsel; (3) the skill and efficiency of the attorneys involved; (4) the complexity and duration of the litigation; (5) the risk of nonpayment; (6) the amount of time devoted to the case by plaintiffs' counsel; and (7) the awards in similar cases.

Gunter v. Ridgewood Energy Corp., 223 F.3d 190, n. 1 (3d Cir. 2000). Evaluation of these factors supports a 33-1/3% fee in this case. The Court may also consider:

⁵ See e.g., *Pinnell v. Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.*, No. 2:19-cv-05738-MAK (E.D. Pa.); *Hay v. Gucci America, Inc.*, No. 17-cv-7148 (D.N.J.); *Spano v. Boeing Co.*, No. 06-cv-0743 (S.D. Ill.); *Kennedy v. ABB, Inc.*, No. 06-cv-4305 (W.D. Mo.); *Diebold et al v. Northern Trust Investments N.A. et al*, No. 09-cv-1934 (N.D. Ill.); *Nolte v. Cigna Corp.*, No. 07-cv-2046 (C.D. Ill.); *Kruger v. Novant Health, Inc.*, No. 14-cv-0208 (M.D.N.C.); *Gordan v. Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co.*, No. 13-cv-30184 (D. Mass.); *Beesley v. International Paper Co.*, No. 06-cv-0703 (S.D. Ill.); *Krueger v. Ameriprise Financial, Inc.*, No. 11-cv-2781 (D. Minn.); *Martin v. Caterpillar, Inc.*, No. 07-cv-1009 (C.D. Ill.); *Will v. General Dynamics*, No. 06-cv-0698 (S.D. Ill.); *Cassell v. Vanderbilt University*, No. 16-cv-2086 (M.D. Tenn.); *Kelly v. The Johns Hopkins Univ.*, No. 16-cv-2835 (D. Md.); *Bilewicz v. FMR, LLC*, No. 13-cv-10636 (D. Mass.); *Terranza v. Safeway, Inc.*, No. 16-cv-03994 (N.D. Cal.); *Stevens v. SEI Investments Co.*, No. 18-cv-4205 (E.D. Pa.); *Schapker v. Waddell & Reed Fin., Inc.*, No. 17-cv-2365 (D. Kan.); *Donald v. Teachers Insurance and Annuity Insurance Association of America*, No. 15-cv-08040 (S.D.N.Y.); *Pease v. Jackson National Life Ins. Co.*, No. 17-cv-284 (W.D. Mich.); *Dennard v. Transamerica Corp.*, No. 15-cv-00030 (N.D. Iowa); *Price v. Eaton Vance Corp.*, 18-cv-12098 (D. Mass.); *Schultz v. Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P.*, No. 126-cv-1346 (E.D. Mo.); *Anderson v. Principal Life Insurance Co., et al.*, No. 15-cv-00119 (S.D. Iowa).

(1) the value of benefits accruing to class members attributable to the efforts of class counsel as opposed to the efforts other groups, such as government agencies conducting investigations; (2) the percentage fee that would have been negotiated had the case been subject to a private contingent fee agreement at the time counsel was retained; and (3) any “innovative” terms of settlement.

In re AT&T Corp., 455 F.3d 160, 165 (3d Cir. 2006); *In re Elec. Carbon Products Antitrust Litig.*, 447 F. Supp. 2d 389, 405-06 (D.N.J. 2006). Evaluation of these factors supports a 33 1/3% fee in this case.

1. The Size of the Fund Created and the Number of Persons Benefitted Supports the Requested Fees

The value of the Settlement in this case is a Settlement Fund of \$950,000.00 which will benefit over 13,000 Settlement Class members. Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 42. Class Counsel negotiated a Settlement for the Class, which is a certain, present benefit for the Class. Significant here, too, is the fact “ERISA class actions based on the same theories as the present matter involve a complex and rapidly evolving area of law.” *In re Schering-Plough Corp. Enhance ERISA Litig.*, 2012 WL 1964451, at *5 (D.N.J. May 31, 2012) (“*Schering-Plough Enhance*”); *see also Smith v. Krispy Kreme Doughnut Corp.*, No. 05-cv-00187, 2007 WL 119157, at *2 (N.D.N.C. Jan. 10, 2007) (recognizing “ERISA is a highly complex and quickly-evolving area of the law” as a factor supporting the proposed settlement). Given the inherent risks of litigation in ERISA cases, the benefit is highly significant to the Settlement Class members as the Settlement provides tangible benefits without the

risks, delays, and costs of ongoing litigation. *In re Cigna*, 2019 WL 4082946, at *12 (E.D.Pa. Aug. 29, 2019) (approved fees of one-third settlement amount). Additionally, as further explained in the accompanying memorandum in support of final approval of the Settlement, maximum potential damages to the Plan as calculated by Plaintiffs is just under \$2 million meaning the Settlement amount is 50% of the recovery Plaintiffs could hope to achieve at trial. *See also* Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 43.

2. The Reaction of the Class to the Settlement

As of the filing of the instant memorandum there have been no objections to either the Settlement or Class Counsel's requests for fees.

3. The Skill and Efficiency of the Attorneys Involved

The skill and efficiency of the attorneys involved also weighs in favor of the requested fees and expenses. Federal Rule 23(g) specifies, unless a statute provides otherwise, a court certifying a class must appoint Class Counsel, and an attorney appointed to serve as Class Counsel "must 'fairly and adequately represent the interests of the class.'" *Donovan v. St. Joseph County Sheriff*, 2012 WL 1601314, at *8 (N.D. Ind. May 3, 2012), quoting FED. R. CIV. P. 23(g)(4). Rule 23(g) directs consideration of: "(i) the work counsel has done in identifying or investigating potential claims in the action; (ii) counsel's experience in handling class actions, other complex litigation, and the types of claims asserted in the action; (iii) counsel's knowledge of the applicable law; and (iv) the resources that counsel will commit to

representing the class.” *In re: Processed Egg Products Antitrust Litig.*, 284 F.R.D. 249, 262 (E.D. Pa. 2012), citing FED. R. CIV. P. 23(g)(1)(A)(i)-(iv). The court may also consider any other matter pertinent to whether Class Counsel can fairly and adequately represent the interests of the class. *Id.*, citing *Sheinberg*, 606 F.3d at 132-33.

Capozzi Adler and the undersigned counsel have significant experience handling ERISA matters and have knowledge of the applicable law. *Id.* at ¶¶ 3-14. The undersigned is the chair of the Fiduciary Practice Group at Capozzi Adler and has led the litigation of this action. *Id.* at ¶ 2. He has been litigating ERISA fiduciary breach lawsuits for 17 years and he and Capozzi Adler currently serve as counsel in over two dozen fiduciary breach actions across the country. *Id.* at ¶¶ 4, 8. Capozzi Adler was recently appointed interim or co-lead counsel in several actions pending across the country and has defeated numerous motions to dismiss and settled analogous cases across the country. *Id.* at ¶¶ 8, 10. Capozzi Adler committed the necessary resources to represent the class. With three office locations, the firm has been successfully serving clients for over 24 years offering a full range of legal services. *Id.* at ¶ 7. Based on the foregoing, Capozzi Adler has the requisite skill, qualifications, and resources to lead this litigation.

4. The Complexity and Duration of the Litigation

“The first factor ‘captures the probable costs, in both time and money, of continued litigation.’” *In re Nat’l Football League Players Concussion Injury Litig.*, 821 F.3d 410, 437 (3d Cir. 2016), *as amended* (May 2, 2016) (“NFL”) (quoting *In re Warfarin Sodium Antitrust Litig.*, 391 F.3d 516, 535-36 (3d Cir. 2004) (internal quotation omitted)). Here, the probable costs of continued litigation with respect to both time and money are high. Considerable additional discovery, both paper and testimonial, would be required before the case would be trial ready, and there would be voluminous briefing ahead in the absence of the proposed Settlement. The Settlement in this Action comes at an opportune time given, if the litigation continues, there would be substantial expense to the Parties associated with necessary factual and expert discovery and assorted motion practice.

5. Class Counsel Undertook the Risk of Nonpayment

Class Counsel advanced this action on an entirely contingent fee basis, assuming a substantial risk the litigation would continue for years and potentially yield no, or very little, recovery. Class Counsel undertook this action aware of the possibility they could be left uncompensated for their time and out-of-pocket expenses. Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 67. Class Counsel’s risk of receiving minimal or no recovery is a substantial factor in considering an award of attorney’s fees.

Throughout the litigation, Defendants have challenged Plaintiffs’ claims and maintained they did not breach their fiduciary duties to the Plan and its participants.

Defendants would have continued to contest this issue had the matter proceeded further into litigation. Defendants asserted numerous defenses to Plaintiffs' claims, opposed certification of the class for litigation purposes, and would likely have filed a dispositive motion. Class Counsel would have continued to vigorously litigate this action at each stage without the guarantee of compensation for their time or reimbursement for their expenses. Class Counsel's agreement to represent the Class and assume the risks of litigation ultimately led to the Class Settlement in this case. Thus, Class Counsel's assumption of the risk of nonpayment weighs in favor of the requested award.

6. Class Counsel Devoted A Significant Amount of Time and Labor to the Case

Capozzi Adler is a nationally recognized firm with extensive experience and expertise in this narrow area of law. Class Counsel has expended 422 hours and incurred \$14,882.60 in expenses. Gyandoh Decl., ¶¶ 69, 71. During the course of litigation and the time period leading up to this Settlement, Class Counsel crafted briefs and arguments, engaged in discovery, reviewed documents, retained and consulted experts, negotiated, and finally settled this case. In that time, Class Counsel has never been paid for their work on this matter, taking the case on a wholly contingent basis. Instead, they faced the very real risk, in the face of staunch opposition from highly qualified defense counsel, they would receive nothing for the

\$279,901.50 worth of professional time spent, and \$14,882.60 in cash outlays they invested in the case.

The above hours do not include time to be spent on the preparation for an interview with the Independent Fiduciary, preparation for and attendance at the Fairness Hearing, communications with Settlement Class members, and monitoring of Defendants' compliance with the Settlement. Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 77. Counsel researched the litigation pre-filing, developed relevant facts, and worked with Plaintiffs on the complaints. Class Counsel minimized expenses by utilizing its own ERISA expertise, where necessary, controlling costs by eliminating travel expenses without sacrificing the national expertise they brought to benefit the Class. With over 422 hours of time spent on this litigation, Class Counsel has been both diligent and efficient in obtaining a meaningful recovery for the Class and the Plan. As explained below in discussion of a lodestar cross check, the requested fee represents a risk multiplier of 1.13.

7. The Comparison Between the Requested Attorney Fee Percentage and the Percentages Awarded in Similar Cases

Courts have permitted counsel fees ranging anywhere from nineteen (19) to forty-five (45) percent of the settlement fund. As noted above (n. 2) courts routinely support counsel fees of 33 1/3% in analogous class actions advanced under ERISA. *See also Abbott v. Lockheed Martin Corp.*, No. 06-cv-701, 2015 WL 4398475 (S.D. Ill. July 17, 2015) (awarding 33.33% fee in case involving allegedly excessive

401(k) fees and resulting losses); *Spano v. Boeing Co.*, No. 06-cv-743, 2016 WL 3791123 (S.D. Ill. Mar. 31, 2016) (same); *Kruger v. Novant Health, Inc.*, No. 1:14-cv-208, 2016 WL 6769066 (M.D.N.C. Sept. 29, 2016) (same); *Gordan v. Massachusetts Mut. Life Ins. Co.*, No. 13-cv-30184, 2016 WL 11272044 (same); *Beesley v. Int'l Paper Co.*, No. 3:06-cv-703, 2014 WL 375432 (S.D. Ill. Jan. 31, 2014) (same); *Krueger v. Ameriprise Financial, Inc.*, No. 11-cv-2781, 2015 WL 4246879 (D. Minn. July 13, 2015); *Waldbuesser v. Northrop Grumman Corp.*, No. 06-cv-6213, 2017 WL 9614818 (C.D. Cal. Oct. 24, 2017) (same); *Will v. Gen. Dynamics Corp.*, No. 06-cv-698, 2010 WL 4818174 (S.D. Ill. Nov. 22, 2010) (same); *Dennard v. Transamerica Corp.* No. 15-cv-30, 2016 WL 6471254 (N.D. Iowa Oct. 28, 2016) (same); *Martin v. Caterpillar Inc.*, No. 07-cv-1009, 2010 WL 11614985 (C.D. Ill. Sept. 10, 2010) (same). Thus, an award of counsel fees in the amount of 33 1/3% of the common fund is appropriate here.

8. Public Policy Considerations

Protecting workers' retirement funds is in the public interest. Public policy relies on private sector enforcement of the pension laws as a necessary adjunct to Department of Labor intervention. *Braden v. Walmart Stores, Inc.*, 588 F.3d 585, 598 (8th Cir. 2009) ("Congress intended that private individuals would play an important role in enforcing ERISA's fiduciary duties") (internal quotation marks omitted). Counsel's fees should reflect the important public policy goal of

“providing lawyers with sufficient incentive to bring common fund cases that serve the public interest.” *Goldberger v. Integrated Resources, Inc.*, 209 F.3d 43, 51 (2d Cir. 2000). While court awarded fees must be reasonable, setting fees too low or randomly will create insufficient incentive to bringing large class action cases. *See In re Veeco Instruments Inc. Sec. Litig.*, No. 05 MDL 01695, 2007 WL 4115808, at *3 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 7, 2007) (citing *Goldberger*, 209 F.3d at 51). Courts must scrutinize the unique circumstances of each case with “a jealous regard to the rights of those who are interested in the fund,” but also provide incentives to bring these cases in the future. *Goldberger*, 209 F.3d at 53.

C. The Requested Fees and Expenses Are Fair and Reasonable Under A Lodestar Cross-Check

While not required, the Third Circuit recommends district courts applying the percentage of the fund method conduct a lodestar cross-check on the reasonableness of the fee award. *See In re Cendant Corp. Sec. Litig.*, 404 F.3d 173, 183 n.4 (3d Cir. 2005) (district court’s percentage-of- recovery award affirmed even though district court did not conduct lodestar cross-check). The Third Circuit has warned the lodestar cross-check “does not trump the primary reliance on the percentage of the common fund method.” *In re Rite Aid Corp. Sec. Litig.*, 396 F.3d 294, 307 (3d Cir. 2005). The lodestar cross- check “need entail neither mathematical precision nor bean counting,” and the “resulting multiplier need not fall within any pre-defined range, provided that the District Court’s analysis justifies the award.” *Id.* “The

district courts may rely on summaries submitted by the attorneys and need not review actual billing records.” *In re Rite Aid*, 396 F.3d at 306-07. When there are no objections to lodestar calculations, “a fullblown lodestar analysis is an unnecessary and inefficient use of judicial resources.” *Dewey v. Volkswagen of America*, 728 F.Supp.2d 546, 592 (D.N.J. 2010).

To calculate attorneys’ fees under the lodestar method, counsel’s reasonable hours expended on the litigation are multiplied by counsel’s reasonable rates. *See Pennsylvania v. Del Valley Citizens’ Council for Clean Air*, 478 U.S. 546, 565 (1986). Class Counsel have expended more than 422 hours on this case. Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 71. The hours spent were reasonable and necessary to the prosecution of the litigation. The rates charged are consistent with those charged by other firms in the field of nationwide ERISA class action work and have been approved by courts in numerous cases. *Id.*, ¶ 76. Moreover, the rates are reasonable in comparison to the firms that defend nationwide ERISA class action cases. *Id.*

The lodestar amount does not include time to prepare and attend the Fairness Hearing, and to continue to supervise the Settlement fund (including consulting with the Settlement Administrator, corresponding with Class Members, and communicating with opposing counsel, activities which will necessarily result in additional lodestar). Hourly rates vary appropriately between attorneys and paralegals depending on the position and experience. The rates are based on a

reasonable hourly billing rate for such services given the geographical area, nature of the services provided, and the experience of the attorney. *Gunter*, 223 F.3d at 195. Considering the benefits of the Settlement, risks of continued litigation, and the experience of Class Counsel, the rates are reasonable. This calculation yields a lodestar of \$279,901.50 based only on the Class Counsel's time. Here, Class Counsel's lodestar yields a multiplier of 1.13, which is well within the range found reasonable in other analogous matters. "Multiples ranging from one to four are frequently awarded in common fund cases when the lodestar method is applied." *In re Cendant Corp. PRIDES Litig.*, 243 F.3d 722, 742 (3d Cir. 2001) (citing *In re Prudential*, 148 F.3d 283, 341 (3d Cir.1998) (quoting 3 Herbert Newberg & Alba Conte, *Newberg on Class Actions*, S 14.03 at 14–5 (3d ed.1992)). Accordingly, the lodestar crosscheck confirms an award of 33 and 1/3 percent is fair and reasonable.

D. Plaintiffs' Counsel's Expenses Should Be Reimbursed

Class Counsel should also be reimbursed the \$14,882.60 in litigation expenses they advanced in prosecuting this case under FED. R. CIV. P. 23(h); *see also In re Safety Components, Inc. Sec. Litig.*, 166 F. Supp.2d 72, 108 (D.N.J. 2001) ("Counsel for a class action is entitled to reimbursement of expenses that were adequately documented and reasonably and appropriately incurred in the prosecution of the class action.") (citing *Abrams v. Lightolier, Inc.*, 50 F.3d 1204, 1225 (3d Cir. 1995)). As a leading treatise states:

An attorney who creates or preserves a common fund by judgment or settlement for the benefit of a class is entitled to receive reimbursement of reasonable fees and expenses involved. The equitable principle that all reasonable expenses incurred in the creation of a fund for the benefit of a class are reimbursable proportionately by those who accept benefits from the fund authorizes reimbursement of full reasonable litigation expenses as costs of the suit in contrast to the more narrowly defined rules of taxable costs of suit under Fed. R Civ. P. 54 (d). . . . The prevailing view is that expenses are awarded in addition to the fee percentage.

Alba Conte, 1 *Attorney Fee Awards* § 2:19 (3d ed.); *see also Sprague v. Ticonic*, 307 U.S. 161, 166-67 (1939) (recognizing a federal court’s equity power to award costs from a common fund); *Camden I Condo. Ass’n v. Dunkle*, 946 F.2d 768, 771 (11th Cir. 1991) (“In accordance with the well-established common fund exception to the American Rule, . . . class counsel. . . are entitled to an award of their . . . expenses out of the fund that has been created for the class by their efforts”).

Counsel in common fund cases may recover those expenses that would normally be charged to a fee-paying client. *Harris v. Marhoefer*, 24 F.3d 16, 19 (9th Cir. 1994) (“Harris may recover as part of the award of attorney’s fees those out-of-pocket expenses that ‘would normally be charged to a fee paying client.’”). These costs and expenses “include such things as expert witness costs, mediation costs, computerized research, court records, travel expenses, and copy, telephone, and facsimile expenses.” *Krueger v. Ameriprise Fin., Inc.*, 2015 WL 4246879 at *3 (D. Minn. July 13, 2015) (citing FED. R. CIV. P. 23); *Boeing*, 444 U.S. at 478; *Abrams*,

50 F.3d at 1225; *Cullen v. Whitman Medical Corp.*, 197 F.R.D. 136, 151 (E.D. Pa. 2000).

Plaintiffs' counsel incurred expenses of \$14,882.60 including costs related to filing fees and legal research. Gyandoh Decl., at ¶ 69. Counsel brought this case without guarantee of reimbursement or recovery, so they had a strong incentive to keep costs to a reasonable level, and they did so. *Krueger*, 2015 WL 4246879 at *3 (citing *In re Marsh ERISA Litig.*, 265 F.R.D. 128, 150 (S.D.N.Y. 2010)) (recognizing counsel with contingent fee agreement has a "strong incentive to keep expenses at a reasonable level"). The expenses are reasonable and should be rewarded. *See, e.g., Cendant PRIDES*, 243 F.3d at 732 n. 12 (quoting the 1985 Task Force Report ("common-fund doctrine [...] allows a person who maintains a lawsuit that results in the creation, preservation, or increase of a fund in which others have a common interest, to be reimbursed from that fund for litigation expense incurred"); *see also AT&T*, 455 F.3d 160, 172 n. 8 (3d Cir. 2006) ("[e]xpenses are generally considered and reimbursed separately from attorneys' fees").

E. The Case Contribution Awards Are Reasonable

Plaintiffs request Class Representatives Nesbeth, Godambe, Gallery, Howell, and Webb be granted a Case Contribution Award in compensation for the time and effort they expended in successfully prosecuting this case to a successful resolution. Such awards acknowledge representative plaintiffs' hard work and sacrifices in

support of the class, as well as their promotion of the public interest. “Courts often grant services awards to named plaintiffs in class action suits to promote the public policy of encouraging individuals to undertake the responsibility of representative lawsuits.” *Caligiuri v. Symantec Corp.*, 855 F.3d 860, 867 (8th Cir. 2017).

Here, Plaintiffs seek award of \$10,000 for each class representative, amounts that are well-deserved. Each of the Class Representatives have been closely involved in this litigation since its inception. They provided documents, reviewed the Complaint, prepared and presented for a deposition, and monitored Class Counsel and the progress of the litigation, including discussions about the terms of the Settlement. Gyandoh Decl., ¶ 92. Each of the Named Plaintiffs have submitted declarations in support of their requests for case contribution awards. The declarations are attached to the Gyandoh Declaration as Exhibits 9 (Nesbeth Declaration), 10 (Godambe Declaration), 11 (Gallery Declaration), 12 (Howell Declaration, and 13 (Webb Declaration).

The total award for the five class representatives represents 5.3 percent of the total Settlement Fund. Substantially larger awards have been approved as well within the ranges typically awarded in comparable cases. *See, e.g., Tussey v. ABB, Inc.*, 2012 WL 1113291, at *21 (W.D. Mo. Nov. 2, 2012) (awarding \$25,000 to each class representative in ERISA 401(k) fee class action); *Mayer v. Driver Solutions, Inc.*, 2012 WL 3578856, at *5 (E.D. Pa. Aug. 17, 2012) (approved \$15,000 award

for class representative); *Bernhard v. TD Bank, N.A.*, 2009 WL 3233541, at *2 (D.N.J. 2009) (“[C]ourts routinely approve incentive awards to compensate named plaintiffs for services they provided and the risks they incurred during the course of the class action litigation.”) (quoting *Cullen*, 197 F.R.D. at 145); *Cook v. Niedert*, 142 F.3d 1004, 1016 (7th Cir. 1998) (upheld \$25,000 award to class representative); *Beesley v. International Paper*, 2014 WL 375432, at *4 (\$25,000 awarded to each of the three named plaintiffs).

III. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above and in the supporting declarations and exhibits filed in support of this motion, Plaintiffs request the Court approve Class Counsel’s request for attorneys’ fees and expenses, and grant the requests for a case contribution award.

Dated: May 12, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

CAPOZZI ADLER, P.C.

/s/ Mark K. Gyandoh

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 12, 2022, a true and correct copy of the foregoing document was filed with the Court utilizing its ECF system, which will send notice of such filing to all counsel of record.

By: Mark K. Gyandoh
Mark K. Gyandoh, Esq.

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

CARLOS O. NESBETH, AMIT)
GODAMBE, JENNY GALLERY,)
MISTY HOWELL and MICAH)
WEBB, individually and on behalf of)
all others similarly situated,)

CIVIL ACTION NO.:
2:21-cv-01444-PD

Plaintiffs,)

v.)

ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH, LLC,)
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF)
ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH, LLC,)
THE 401(K) PLAN COMMITTEE)
OF ICON CLINICAL RESEARCH,)
LLC and JOHN DOES 1-30.)

Defendants.

**[PROPOSED] ORDER AWARDING PLAINTIFFS’ COUNSEL
ATTORNEYS’ FEES AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES AND
PLAINTIFFS’ CASE CONTRIBUTION AWARDS**

This matter having come before the Court on _____, on the application of Class Counsel for an award of attorneys’ fees and reimbursement of expenses incurred in the Action and for Case Contribution Awards for the Named Plaintiffs, having considered all papers filed and proceedings conducted herein, having found the settlement for this Action to be fair, reasonable and adequate and otherwise being fully informed in the premises and good cause appearing therefore:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND ADJUDGED:

1. All of the capitalized terms used herein shall have the same meanings as set forth in the Settlement Agreement and Release (“Settlement Agreement”) dated January 28, 2022 and filed with the Court.

2. This Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this application and all matters relating thereto, including all members of the Settlement Class.

3. Plaintiffs’ Class Counsel are hereby awarded attorneys’ fees of \$_____ and reimbursement of expenses in the sum of \$_____ and reimbursement of expenses in the sum of \$_____ (the “Attorneys’ Fees and Expenses”), to be paid from the Settlement Fund. The Court finds that the amount of fees awarded is appropriate and that the amount of fees awarded are fair and reasonable given the substantial risks of non-recovery, the time and effort involved, and the result obtained for the Settlement Class.

4. Each of the three Named Plaintiffs is awarded \$_____ as a Case Contribution Award, as defined in the Settlement Agreement, in recognition of their contributions to this Action.

SO ORDERED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

HON. PAUL S. DIAMOND
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE