	STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE FRICT OF VERMONT	U.S. DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF VERMONT FILED 2019 DEC -4 AM II: 29
CHERYL ROUSSEAU AND PETER ROUSSEAU, Plaintiffs	) ) )	BY SEFUTY OLDAY
v.	) ) Docket No. <u>2: 18</u>	3·cv·205
JOHN BOYD COATES, III, M.D. AND CENTRAL VERMONT MEDICAL CENTER, INC., Defendants	) ) ) )	

### COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau, by their attorneys, Gravel & Shea PC, hereby complain of Defendants and allege as follows:

### Introduction

1. This is an action for medical negligence, failure to obtain informed consent, fraud, battery, negligent infliction of emotional distress, intentional infliction of emotional distress, breach of contract, Consumer Protection Act violation and negligent supervision arising from John Boyd Coates, III, M.D. ("Dr. Coates"), while an agent of the entity now known as Central Vermont Medical Center, Inc. ("CVMC"), choosing to insert his own genetic material into Cheryl Rousseau and choosing to inseminate Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material after representing that he would inseminate Cheryl Rousseau using donor genetic material of an unnamed medical student who resembled her husband, Peter Rousseau, and who met specific physical criteria (the "Fraudulent Insemination").

### Parties and Others

- 2. Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau are husband and wife. They are citizens of the State of Florida.
- 3. Defendant John Boyd Coates, III, M.D., is a citizen of the State of Vermont.

  Defendant Dr. Coates is a Vermont licensed medical doctor. At the time of the Fraudulent

  Insemination, Defendant Dr. Coates practiced as an obstetrician/gynecologist in central Vermont and was an attending physician at what was, at the time, Central Vermont Hospital, Inc.

  ("CVH"), Berlin, Vermont.
- 4. Defendant Central Vermont Medical Center, Inc. is a Vermont non-profit corporation. It was known as Central Vermont Hospital, Inc. at the time of the Fraudulent Insemination. Central Vermont Hospital, Inc. was the predecessor in interest to Central Vermont Medical Center, Inc., which was incorporated in 1984.
- 5. Barbara Mary Frances Rousseau, now known as Barbara Mary Frances Gordon, was born on December 27, 1977 at CVH to Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau at as a result of Defendant Dr. Coates' Fraudulent Insemination.

### Jurisdiction

6. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C.§ 1332, diversity of citizenship, there being at least \$75,000 in controversy, exclusive of interest and costs.

### <u>Facts</u>

- 7. Plaintiffs were married on October 12, 1974.
- 8. Plaintiffs both had children from earlier marriages and decided that they would like to have a child together.



- 9. However, before meeting Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau, Plaintiff Peter Rousseau had undergone a vasectomy. Plaintiff Peter Rousseau explored whether it would be possible to reverse his vasectomy and learned that it was not medically feasible.
- 10. Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau met with Defendant Dr. Coates and explained her desire to conceive a child with her husband Plaintiff Peter Rousseau. Defendant Dr. Coates, as a professional service, agreed to artificially inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau using donor genetic material (the "Procedure").
- 11. Defendant Dr. Coates represented to Plaintiffs that he would obtain donor genetic material from an unnamed medical student who resembled Plaintiff Peter Rousseau, who met specific characteristics that Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau required and who had been tested for purposes of being a donor of genetic material for use in donor insemination (the "Representation").
- 12. The Representation was false and known by Defendant Dr. Coates to be false when he made the Representation.
- 13. Plaintiffs believed and relied upon the Representation made by Defendant Dr. Coates.
- 14. Defendant Dr. Coates required that Plaintiff Peter Rousseau retain an attorney to draw up a contract confirming that Plaintiff Peter Rousseau would adopt any child born of the Procedure.
- 15. Plaintiff Peter Rousseau complied with Defendant Dr. Coates' requirement, obtained the services of an attorney to draw up the contract, executed it and had it delivered to Defendant Dr. Coates.

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- 16. Defendant Dr. Coates required that Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau undergo testing in advance of the Procedure at CVH. Plaintiff compiled with this request.
- 17. Defendant Dr. Coates performed the Procedure on Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau twice at CVH.
- 18. Defendant Dr. Coates performed the Procedure in March 1977 at CVH. However, instead of inserting the genetic material pursuant to the Representation, Defendant Dr. Coates inserted his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau so as to impregnate her with his own genetic material and thereby be the biological father of her child.
- 19. Had Plaintiffs known that Defendant Dr. Coates would use his own genetic material to insert into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau they would not have agreed to the Procedure.
  - 20. In May 1977, Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau learned that she was pregnant.
- 21. Defendant Dr. Coates personally delivered Barbara Mary Frances Rousseau by cesarean section on December 27, 1977.
- 22. Defendant Dr. Coates continued to act as Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau's obstetrician and gynecologist for one year after the birth of Barbara Mary Frances Rousseau.
- 23. Defendant Dr. Coates knew that the child born as Barbara Mary Frances Rousseau was his biological daughter but chose to never disclose this fact to Plaintiffs nor to Barbara Mary Frances Gordon.
- 24. To this day, Defendant Dr. Coates denies that he inserted his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and that he is the genetic father of Barbara Mary Frances Gordon.



- 25. Defendant Dr. Coates fraudulently and knowingly concealed from Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau his breach of the terms of the Representation and his choice to use his own genetic material in the Procedure.
- 26. Defendant Dr. Coates' choice to not disclose to Plaintiffs that he had chosen to use his own genetic material to impregnate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau remained a secret until October 2018, when Barbara Mary Frances Gordon used DNA testing in an effort to learn more information about her biological father. In doing research using the results of DNA testing, Barbara Mary Frances Gordon determined that Defendant Dr. Coates was her genetic father.

## COUNT I Medical Negligence

- 27. Defendant Dr. Coates was a licensed medical doctor in the State of Vermont providing medical treatment that required a degree of medical skill and professional judgment.
- 28. Defendant Dr. Coates had a duty to Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau to provide health care consistent with the degree of knowledge or skill possessed or the degree of care ordinarily exercised by a reasonably skillful, careful and prudent health care professional engaged in a similar practice under the same or similar circumstances whether or not within the State of Vermont.
- 29. Defendant Dr. Coates failed to exercise this required degree of care when he chose to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material after making the Representation.
- 30. As a proximate result of Defendant Dr. Coates' failure to exercise the requisite degree of care, Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau suffered injuries that they would not otherwise have incurred.



## COUNT II Failure to Obtain Informed Consent

- 31. In providing professional medical treatment, Defendant Dr. Coates failed to disclose to Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau that he was choosing to breach the terms of the Representation and was choosing to use his own genetic material to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau during the Procedure.
- 32. Defendant Dr. Coates' use of his own genetic material prevented Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau from making a knowledgeable evaluation of the reasonably foreseeable risks associated with this Procedure.
- 33. A reasonable medical professional in like or similar circumstances would have disclosed that he was using his own genetic material to inseminate the patient and would not have performed the Procedure.
- 34. Defendant Dr. Coates neither sought nor obtained Plaintiffs' consent to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau or to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material.
- 35. Defendant Dr. Coates withheld accurate information as to the origins of the genetic material that he chose to insert into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau as part of the Procedure.
- 36. Defendant Dr. Coates chose to withhold the information as to the origin of the genetic material he chose to insert into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau despite Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau's specific and reasonable requests for genetic material that met specific criteria.
- 37. Neither Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau nor a reasonable person in their circumstances would have consented to the Procedure had Defendant Dr. Coates not chosen to provide them with accurate and truthful information.

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## COUNT III Fraud

- 38. When Defendant Dr. Coates made the Representation to Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau, Defendant Dr. Coates knew that Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau would not have allowed him to go forward with the Procedure unless he made the Representation.
- 39. Plaintiffs would not have consented to the Procedure had Defendant Dr. Coates informed them that he was choosing to breach the terms of the Representation and instead was choosing to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau, to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material and was choosing to father a child through Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau.
- 40. Defendant Dr. Coates' Representation was false and known by him to be false when made.
- 41. Defendant Dr. Coates intended and knew that Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau would rely on his false Representation in agreeing to go forward with the Procedure.
- 42. Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau did not know that Defendant Dr. Coates' Representation was false, and justifiably relied upon and trusted Defendant's Representation as a condition of Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau undergoing the Procedure.

# COUNT IV <u>Battery</u>

43. Defendant Dr. Coates intended to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and intended to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material during the Procedure.

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- 44. Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau did not consent to Defendant Dr. Coates inserting his own genetic material into her or to Defendant Dr. Coates inseminating her with his own genetic material.
- 45. Defendant Dr. Coates' choice to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff
  Cheryl Rousseau and his choice to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic
  material was harmful, offensive and constituted a battery upon Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau.

# COUNT V Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress

- 46. Defendant Dr. Coates had a professional relationship with Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau and had undertaken an obligation to Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau of a nature that necessarily implicated the well-being of Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau.
- 47. Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau suffered a physical impact from the external force exerted by Defendant Dr. Coates.
- 48. There was an especially likely risk that Defendant Dr. Coates' negligent conduct would cause serious emotional distress to the Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau.
- 49. The negligent actions and omissions of Defendant Dr. Coates as set out in this Complaint in breach of his obligation to the Plaintiffs in fact caused Plaintiffs physical impact which led to serious emotional distress.

## COUNT VI Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress

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- 50. The conduct of Defendant Dr. Coates as set out in this Complaint was outrageous.
- 51. The conduct of Defendant Dr. Coates was intentional.



52. The conduct of Defendant Dr. Coates caused Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau severe emotional distress.

# COUNT VII Breach of Contract

- 53. Defendant Dr. Coates offered to enter into a contract with Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau under the terms of the Representation.
- 54. Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau accepted Defendant Dr. Coates' offer to perform the Procedure pursuant to the Representation, thus creating a contract (the "Contract") pursuant to the terms of the Representation.
- 55. Per the Contract, Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau paid Defendant Dr. Coates for the donor genetic material pursuant to the Representation and for his professional services in performing the Procedure.
- 56. Defendant Dr. Coates breached the Contract with Plaintiffs by choosing to use his own genetic material instead of adhering to the Representation.
- 57. Defendant Dr. Coates breached the Contract with Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau by choosing to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and by inseminating Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material during the Procedure.

# COUNT VIII Consumer Protection Act Violation

58. Defendant Dr. Coates engaged in unfair and deceptive acts and practices in the conduct of his trade and in commerce: by making a false Representation to Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau; by leading Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau to believe that he would adhere to the Representation; by choosing not to inform Plaintiffs that he

would insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau; and by choosing to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau during the Procedure with his own genetic material.

- 59. This misrepresentation was material.
- 60. Plaintiffs suffered damages as a result of this material misrepresentation.

# COUNT IX Negligent Supervision

- 61. Defendant CVMC provided medical services to patients in substantial part through the use of attending physicians and other physicians ("<u>Physicians</u>") with whom it permitted and contracted to use its facilities (this "<u>Arrangement</u>").
- 62. The Physicians who were part of this Arrangement were agents and employees of Defendant CVMC.
- 63. Through this Arrangement, Defendant CVMC led patients to believe that the physicians who used its facilities to deliver patient care and services were employees or agents of Defendant CVMC.
- 64. Defendant CVMC's patients, including Plaintiffs, relied upon this Arrangement in deciding to use the services of physicians at Defendant CVMC.
- 65. Defendant CVMC had a duty to supervise the physicians who provided services at and through Defendant CVMC to ensure that the Physicians who were providing services met applicable standards of care and were not otherwise committing acts of the nature complained of in the Complaint.
- 66. Defendant CVMC breached its duty of supervision as it relates to the conduct of Defendant Dr. Coates as set out in this Complaint.



- 67. Defendant CVMC's breach of its duty to adequately supervise Defendant Dr. Coates enabled Defendant to insert his own genetic material into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau and to inseminate Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau with his own genetic material.
- 68. Plaintiffs were injured as a result of Defendant CVMC's failure to supervise Defendant Dr. Coates.
- 69. If Defendant CVMC had supervised the conduct of Defendant Dr. Coates,
  Defendant Dr. Coates would not have been able to breach the terms of the Representation and to
  instead use his own genetic material to insert into Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau, to inseminate
  Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau during the Procedure with his own genetic material and would not
  have been able to father a child by Plaintiff Cheryl Rousseau.

### Respondeat Superior

- 70. Defendant Dr. Coates was operating in the course and scope of his job duties as an employee or agent of CVMC when he committed the acts and omissions complained of herein.
  - 71. CVMC is liable for Defendant Dr. Coates' actions as set out in this Complaint.

#### Fraudulent Concealment

72. Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau are persons entitled to bring the action set out in this Complaint but were prevented from doing so until October 2018 by the fraudulent concealment of these causes of action by Defendant Dr. Coates.

### Compensatory Damages

73. The actions and inactions of Defendants Dr. Coates and CVMC as set out in this Complaint proximately caused damage to the Plaintiffs for which they are entitled to compensation.

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## Exemplary Damages

74. The actions of Defendant Dr. Coates as described in this Complaint were done by Defendant Dr. Coates recklessly or wantonly without regard for the rights of Plaintiffs Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau, were outrageously reprehensible, had the character of outrage frequently associated with a crime and were done with malice, thereby entitling Plaintiffs to exemplary damages.

WHEREFORE Plaintiffs demand compensatory damages in excess of \$75,000, the minimum jurisdictional amount of this Court, and exemplary damages in an amount to be determined by the jury, together with interest, attorneys' fees and such other relief as may be available to them.

### **JURY DEMAND**

Plaintiff demands trial by jury of all issues so triable.

Dated:

Burlington, Vermont December 4, 2018

Jerome F. O'Neill, Esq. Celeste E. Laramie, Esq.

Gravel & Shea PC

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For Plaintiffs



JS 44 (Rev. 08/18)

## **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS		DEFENDANTS							
Cheryl Rousseau and Peter Rousseau			John Boyd Coates, III, M.D. and Central Vermont Medical Center, Inc.						
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Pinellas County, FL  (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.						
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)			Attorneys (If Known)						
Jerome F. O'Neill, Esq., Gravel & Shea PC 76 St. Paul Street, 7th Floor, P.O. Box 369, Burlington, VT 05402-		-0369	Peter B. Joslin, Esq., Theriault & Joslin, P.C. 141 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602-2916						
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)		TIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPA	L PARTIES			
☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	3 Federal Question (U.S. Government N	Not a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) PT en of This State		Incorporated or Pri		or Defenda PTF	nnı) DEF ૐ 4
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	∆ 4 Diversity     (Indicate Citizenshi)	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citiz	en of Another State		Incorporated and P of Business In A		<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
	·			en or Subject of a reign Country	3 🗖 3	Foreign Nation		<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an "X" in One Box On		FC	ORFEITURE/PENALTY		here for: Nature of		escription STATUT	
110 Insurance   120 Marine   130 Miller Act   140 Negotiable Instrument   150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment   151 Medicare Act   152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans)   153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits   160 Stockholders' Suits   190 Other Contract   195 Contract Product Liability   196 Franchise   REAL PROPERTY   210 Land Condemnation   220 Foreclosure   230 Rent Lease & Ejectment   240 Torts to Land   245 Tort Product Liability   290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 362 Personal Injury Medical Malpractice CIVIL RIGHTS 440 Other Civil Rights 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education	PERSONAL INJUR  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability Personal Injury - Product Liability Personal Injury Product Liability Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage 385 Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITIO Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Oth 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	Y	LABOR 10 Other  LABOR 10 Fair Labor Standards Act 10 Labor/Management Relations 10 Railway Labor Act 11 Family and Medical Leave Act 10 Other Labor Litigation 11 Employee Retirement Income Security Act 11 Income Security Act 12 IMMIGRATION 13 Naturalization Application 15 Other Immigration 16 Other Immigration 17 Actions	422 Appe	ral 28 USC 158 drawal ISC 157  RTY RIGHTS rrights at t - Abbreviated Drug Application emark /SECURITY (1395ff) k Lung (923) C/DIWW (405(g))	375 False Cl   376 Qui Tam 3729(a)   400 State Re 410 Antitrus 410 Antitrus 470 Rackete Corrupt   480 Consum 485 Telepho Protecti   490 Cable/S.   850 Securitis 550 Securitis   891 Agricult   893 Environ Act   895 Arbitrat   899 Adminis Act/Rev	laims Act in (31 USC )) capportions at ind Banking ree tition orer Influenc Organizati ore Credit one Consun ion Act at TV ess/Commo ige tatutal Acts umental Ma in of Inform strative Pro- ice or Api Decision utionality of	ment  g  ced and  cions  mer  ddities/  dtions  atters  mation  ocedure  peal of
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION  Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filin 28 U.S.C. § 1332  Brief description of cause: Fraudulent insemination by physician									
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION	N D	EMAND \$ over \$75,000		CHECK YES only URY DEMAND:		n complai □ No	
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