

## Dangerous Drug Alerts:



**Zofran** (ondansetron) is a drug that was developed and manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline for the treatment of severe nausea caused by chemotherapy. Zofran has also been used, off-label, to help expectant mothers combat morning sickness-related nausea. Zofran is usually prescribed by well-intentioned obstetricians for only the most severe cases of nausea. Zofran has not been approved for this use by the Food and Drug Administration, but “off-label” prescription and use of the drug is not impermissible. The Zofran lawsuits focus on the fact that the drug has not yet been proven safe for pregnant women and their unborn children. In fact, several studies show that Zofran may increase the incidence of birth defects, especially heart malformations (including atrial and ventricular septal defects and tetralogy of Fallot) and cleft palate injuries. SDSBS’s Mass Tort Unit is representing children who have sustained birth defect injuries after their mothers ingested the brand name version of Zofran during the first few months of their pregnancies. ♦



**Xarelto** (also known as rivaroxaban) is a blood-thinning drug manufactured and marketed through a joint venture between Bayer and Janssen Pharmaceuticals. Xarelto is often prescribed for patients with atrial fibrillation to reduce the risks of developing a blood clotting event such as a stroke. The drug is also approved for prevention of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary blood clots following surgery. The allegations with regard to Xarelto are similar to those made in the Pradaxa litigation, which was settled in 2014. In this litigation, the plaintiffs contended that this new class of drugs, which also includes Eliquis, is unreasonably dangerous in comparison to traditional treatments such as warfarin or Coumadin. The Xarelto lawsuits that have been filed allege that the drug substantially increases a patient’s risk of bleeding events, such as gastrointestinal bleeding and intracranial hemorrhage, without providing any greater benefit than other, safer blood-thinning drugs. We are currently accepting cases involving patients who suffered an injury or died as a result of a Xarelto-induced bleeding event. SDSBS attorney **Brenda Fulmer** has been appointed as a co-chair of the Discovery Committee. The Committee will focus on document review and depositions relating to the defendants in the national, multi-district litigation involving Xarelto. ♦



*(l-r) Attorney Pat Quinlan, U. S. Congressman Patrick Murphy, and Mr. Quinlan’s son, Brian.*

## My best ever trip to Washington by Patrick Quinlan

On June 10, 2015, I traveled to Washington, DC to advocate on behalf of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. I have been involved with LLS since shortly after my then 4-year-old son, Brian, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Fortunately, Brian successfully completed his treatment and is a happy and healthy 15-year-old.

As a trial lawyer and a political junkie, I love meeting with our elected officials and their staff to lobby on behalf of the organization that helped save my son’s life. I have participated in six annual LLS advocacy trips to Washington. I usually carry a picture of Brian to explain my personal connection to the fight against blood cancer. This year, however, I had something much better – Brian himself, in the flesh. For the first time, Brian accompanied me on my trip to the nation’s capital. We had an exciting day meeting several House members and House and Senate staffers to discuss two bills designed to increase the access of blood cancer patients to state-of-the-art treatments: the 21st Century Cures Act (HR 6) and the Patient Access to Treatments Act (HR 1600).

Without a doubt, the congressional MVP of our DC trip was Representative Patrick Murphy. He was busy on the House floor all afternoon, voting on several important matters. But he had a staff member, Daniel Marrow, bring us on the underground train system from his office in the Cannon House Office Building to the Capitol. Rep. Murphy then took time to meet with us, explaining to Brian how the representatives are seated on the floor of the House chamber, how the votes are cast and counted, and how the State of the Union address is conducted. He also posed with us for a picture.

Whenever I go to Washington, I feel like a kid again, full of idealism and enthusiasm for our system of participatory democracy. It was great to have my own kid share that experience with me. I look forward to bringing Brian back to Capitol Hill as we continue to pursue the mission of LLS – creating a world without blood cancer. ♦