

PLAINTIFFS PREVAIL IN KEY EXPERT TESTIMONY RULINGS IN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION LITIGATION

LOS ANGELES, CA (September 23, 2025) – In a major victory for Plaintiffs in the coordinated social media litigation (JCCP5255), the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, has denied the overwhelming majority of Defendants’ motions to exclude expert testimony under the Sargon standard. The ruling clears the way for Plaintiffs to present robust scientific evidence at trial regarding the mental health harms caused by the design and operation of social media platforms.

The litigation involves claims brought by individuals, including minors and their families, against Meta (Facebook and Instagram), Snap Inc. (Snapchat), ByteDance (TikTok), and Google (YouTube), alleging that the platforms’ addictive design features have contributed to a youth mental health crisis.

In a comprehensive 87-page ruling, Judge Carolyn B. Kuhl rejected Defendants’ efforts to disqualify all of Plaintiffs’ general causation experts, including leading researchers in psychiatry, neuroscience, pediatrics, and media psychology. The Court found that:

- All but one of Plaintiffs’ general causation experts will be permitted to testify at trial;
- Plaintiffs’ experts employed reliable methodologies, including systematic literature reviews, longitudinal studies, and Bradford Hill analyses;
- The experts’ opinions were not barred by Section 230, as they focused on platform design features rather than third-party content;
- The experts’ conclusions were grounded in accepted scientific principles and supported by peer-reviewed research and internal documents from the Defendants themselves.

“This ruling affirms the strength of the scientific evidence supporting our claims,” said Plaintiffs’ Lead Counsel. “The Court recognized that social media platforms are not just passive conduits of content—they are engineered environments that can profoundly affect adolescent brain development and harm mental health.”

This ruling marks a pivotal moment in the litigation, allowing Plaintiffs to move forward with compelling expert testimony on how social media design features contribute to addiction, anxiety, depression, and other harms among youth. The first personal injury trial is currently set for November 2025.

Lead Counsel for the Plaintiffs in the JCCP are Joseph VanZandt of Beasley Allen, Mariana McConnel of Kiesel Law, Rachel Lanier of Lanier Law Firm, and Rahul Ravipudi of Panish | Shea | Ravipudi LLP.

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