

Suzanne Cate Jones

Los Angeles, California
Shareholder

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Areas of Practice & Industry Specialties

Litigation; Health Care Law; Class Actions; Labor & Employment; Life Sciences



Suzanne Cate Jones has extensive experience litigating complex business and commercial disputes, class actions, and litigation involving the health care industry. Ms. Jones is a Shareholder in Buchalter's Los Angeles office, and a member of the Firm's Litigation and Health Care Practice Groups.

Ms. Jones regularly represents hospitals and hospital systems in litigation concerning a broad range of health care areas, including medical staff and peer review, antitrust, medical privacy/security breach, credentialing, and hospital commercial contracting disputes, and has successfully litigated and resolved several health care-related class action matters on behalf of hospital clients. Ms. Jones also advises health care organizations on hospital and medical staff bylaws, rules and regulations, peer review matters, credentialing and physician recruiting agreements, among other matters.

Ms. Jones also has experience defending federal and state court class action complaints filed against her corporate clients in many other types of class action lawsuits, including statutory consumer claims, privacy, wage-and-hour and other types of employment-related claims.

In addition to health care clients, Ms. Jones represents clients across a wide variety of industries, including consumer credit, financial, hotels, real estate, food and beverage, food supplements/pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, and transportation. She regularly litigates wage/hour and other types of employment disputes, as well as disputes concerning real property, trade secrets, partnerships, franchises, product liability, securities, corporate governance, unfair competition and consumer claims. She supervised the defense of state attorney general actions brought against the tobacco industry seeking to recover monies expended by the states on smoking-related diseases, and has litigated several high profile product liability claims and commercial business disputes, among others.

Prior to her legal career, Ms. Jones worked for one of the nation's largest construction companies where she was responsible for regulatory and contract compliance for large construction projects, among other things. She also has worked for entrepreneurial start-ups and Fortune 500 companies in various positions.

Ms. Jones has served on the board of the Health Law Committee for the California State Bar. She also is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association; the Association of Business Trial Lawyers; the California Society for Healthcare Attorneys; and the Los Angeles County Bar Association Litigation and Healthcare Law Sections.

Ms. Jones is repeatedly acknowledged as a Southern California Super Lawyer and has received multiple awards and recognition for her Pro Bono work, including by Alliance for Children's Rights and Chadbourne & Parke LLP. She also served on the Governor's Advisory Panel on Hate Crimes.

Representative Matters

- Successfully mediated and resolved partnership dissolution dispute involving eye surgery centers and

claims for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty and fraud

- Successfully resolved medical privacy/security breach class action litigation on behalf of healthcare provider (Ventura Superior Court 2015)*
- Successfully enforced class action waivers and compelled individual arbitrations in multiple wage and hour class action lawsuits (federal and California state court)*
- Successfully resolved multiple complaints alleging PAGA (Private Attorney General Action) claims, including complaints filed against one of the nation's largest motor carriers*
- Represented nationwide credit reporting agency in defense of federal court putative class action lawsuit involving claims for violation of Fair Credit Reporting Act; succeeded through motion practice in having court strike plaintiff's class action allegations and plaintiff thereafter dismissed case (Central District Cal.)*
- Represented international corporation and several of its inside directors in 20 putative class action suits brought by shareholders in connection with CEO and Director's proposal to purchase all outstanding shares of stock and take the company private. Following discovery, parties reached an agreement to settle all cases and dismiss all claims*
- Successfully moved to dismiss federal court franchise investment law claims asserted in nationwide putative class action filed against national refrigerated trucking company (N.D. Cal. 2012)*
- Obtained dismissal for hospital client in fraud and unfair business practices class action filed against multiple hospitals and County seeking millions of dollars and punitive damages (Ventura Superior Court 2013)*
- Represented limited liability company and large hospital (its majority stakeholder) in partnership dispute, breach of contract and fraud action involving hospital developer and construction of new hospital and medical office building*
- Obtained dismissal with prejudice of federal court antitrust action filed by high profile physician seeking treble and punitive damages against hospital and other defendants, following a series of successful motions to dismiss (Central District Cal. 2016)*
- Successfully moved to specially strike majority of physician's claims against hospital and its affiliated entity pursuant to California's anti-SLAPP statute, including claims for whistleblower retaliation under California Health & Safety Code §1278.5 and Bus. & Prof. Code §2056, resulting in complete dismissal of affiliate entity; also obtained substantial attorneys' fees award (Ventura Superior Court 2015)*
- Succeeded in obtaining dismissal with prejudice of medical corporation's lawsuit for alleged denial of due process against hospital; demurrer to complaint sustained without leave to amend (Ventura Superior Court 2016)*
- Prevailed on appeal on behalf of hospital in connection with physician's challenge to breach of contract arbitration award in favor of hospital (California Court of Appeal 2016)*
- Successfully moved to specially strike physician's California Health & Safety Code §1278.5 whistleblower retaliation claim against hospital pursuant to California's anti-SLAPP statute (Riverside Superior Court 2013)*
- Prevailed on summary judgment in defense of complaint filed by employee against transportation industry employer alleging claims for racial and sexual discrimination*
- Succeeded with motion to specially strike physician's claims against hospital, including physician's whistleblower retaliation claim under California Health & Safety Code §1278.5, pursuant to California's anti-SLAPP statute; entire lawsuit dismissed (L.A. Superior Court 2011)*
- Successfully resolved whistleblower retaliation and wrongful termination in violation of public policy claims alleged by employee against health plan employer*
- Member of trial team that obtained fraud verdict in jury trial against international computer and electronics corporation (California state court 2011)*
- Obtained summary judgment on all claims on behalf of individual and corporate defendants in Los

Angeles Superior Court real estate partnership action where plaintiffs sought in excess of \$1 billion in damages and other relief*

- Secured dismissal of all claims filed against California hospital system in California federal court for purported Medicare fraud under the False Claims Act*
- Represented healthcare provider in connection with confidential government investigation concerning outlier reimbursement*
- Successfully represented large hospital system in defense and resolution of government investigation related to two sealed False Claims Act Qui Tam actions alleging Medicare fraud; each Qui Tam action was dismissed by both the government and the relator*
- Successfully defended nationwide credit reporting agency in federal court putative class action lawsuit involving Fair Credit Reporting Act claims; court dismissed case after granting summary judgment and denying class certification (Northern Dist. of Cal.) *
- Represented health insurance company in successful appeal related to licensing dispute and alleged trade disparagement*
- Successfully defended international fruit company in “bet the company” litigation filed by competitor who alleged client’s theft of competitor’s claimed intellectual property interest in a hybrid pineapple, and asserted trade secret, Lanham Act and conversion claims. After plaintiff was forced to dismiss its trade secrets claim, the court issued a crime/fraud ruling against plaintiff, and clients’ summary judgment briefing was completed, case settled on favorable terms*
- Obtained summary judgment of all claims on behalf of international beverage company in fraud, negligent misrepresentation and breach of fiduciary duty action involving claimed damages in excess of \$175 million arising from failed investments in South African bottling company*
- Part of the team that defeated an attempt to enforce an alleged foreign judgment for \$489 million against California-based international company that was based on fraudulent documents*
- Successfully defended large corporation in aerospace and defense industry against putative class action for intentional age discrimination (L.A. Superior Court)*
- Secured dismissal on behalf of major Asian power utility in fraud and breach of contract action brought in California state court after briefing was completed on motions to dismiss (forum non conveniens and failure to state a claim)*
- On behalf of telecommunications company, obtained dismissal of all claims and full award on cross-complaint along with sanctions imposed on plaintiff in federal court action where plaintiff had alleged claims of libel, breach of contract and negligent and intentional business torts*

* Represents experience from a previous law firm.

Publications

- Law Enforcement and Healthcare: When Consent, Privacy, and Safety Collide, *The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine*, February 1, 2018

Education

Ms. Jones earned her J.D. from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles in 1991 where she was an editor of the *International and Comparative Law Journal*. She earned her B.A. in History and Certificate in Russian Studies from the University of Southern California and a degree in Russian Studies from the Pushkin Institute in Moscow, Russia.

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court for the District of Utah
- U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona