

## **Hissey Kientz, LLP Warns Duragesic Patch Users About Potential Health Risks of Fentanyl Overdose**

Austin, Texas (PRWEB) December 12, 2008 — The law firm of [Hissey Kientz, LLP](#) wishes to alert patients who use the Duragesic (fentanyl) pain patch of the serious and potentially fatal health risks they may face from the use of this powerful painkilling drug.

The [Duragesic pain patch](#) was first approved by the Food and Drug Administration in August 1990 to treat certain patients with chronic pain. The Duragesic-brand patch is manufactured by Alza Corp., which is owned by Johnson & Johnson. Generic versions of the pain patch—marketed under the name fentanyl—are also sold by several other companies.

The pain patch contains an extremely potent pain medication known as fentanyl, which is about 80 times as strong as morphine, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Federal and state health authorities have reported hundreds of cases of hospitalization or death that have been linked to fentanyl overdoses.

Millions of fentanyl or Duragesic patches have been [recalled](#) since 2005 due to manufacturing problems that could lead to a fatal overdose. Because some of these recalled patches may have been cut or improperly sealed, they could cause patients or other individuals who handle the pain patch to be directly exposed to the fentanyl gel contained in its drug reservoir. Due to the high potency of fentanyl, direct exposure can lead to a [fatal overdose](#) or other serious injuries.

“Fentanyl is a very powerful drug. A number of patients have died after problems with the pain patch caused the gel inside to come in direct contact with their skin,” says attorney Michael Hissey of Hissey Kientz, LLP. “Patients who use Duragesic or generic fentanyl patches need to be aware of the health dangers that could result from the use of these products.”

In June 2005, the manufacturer of the Duragesic patch added a “black-box warning” to the product’s label to alert doctors and patients of the risk of severe and potentially deadly side effects linked to the pain patch, including “life-threatening hypoventilation” and “fatal respiratory depression.” The label also warned that patches which are cut or damaged should not be used because of the risk for fatal overdose that they pose.

The Duragesic black-box warning was updated in February 2008 to include additional information about the health risks associated with the patch. The new warning advised patients to avoid exposing the patch to external heat sources after it is placed on the skin. Because heat can increase the rate at which the medication in a transdermal patch is absorbed into the body, patients could receive an increased dose of fentanyl, which may lead to an overdose. According to the updated warning, patients who use the Duragesic or fentanyl patch should avoid heating pads, electric blankets, sunbathing, hot baths and other activities or items that create heat.

Many patients who were harmed after using the Duragesic or fentanyl patch have filed [lawsuits](#) against the manufacturers of these products. In November 2008, a jury awarded \$16.5 million to the family of a Chicago woman who died of a fentanyl overdose while wearing the Duragesic patch (Case No. 04L5351; Cook County, Illinois, Circuit Court).

#### About Hissey Kientz, LLP

Hissey Kientz, LLP is currently accepting cases involving individuals who may have been injured as a result of a fentanyl or Duragesic overdose. Hissey Kientz, LLP also represents those who contracted mesothelioma or lung cancer as a result of asbestos exposure, and those injured by the [Ortho Evra patch](#), [Digitek](#), [Trasylol](#), the [Composix Kugel mesh patch](#), [PPH related to Fen-Phen](#), [gadolinium MRI contrast dyes](#) or other defective drugs and devices. To learn more about the firm and other drug cases, visit Hissey Kientz, LLP ([www.hkllp.com](http://www.hkllp.com)) or call toll-free at (866) 275-4454.