

'Gas Station Heroin' Cos. Sued Over User's Overdose

By **Mike Curley**

Law360 (December 23, 2025, 2:44 PM EST) -- The estate of a woman who died of a tianeptine overdose is suing the makers and sellers of tianeptine products in Pennsylvania state court, saying while they market the products as safe diet supplements, they're actually highly addictive opioids.

In a **complaint** filed last week, the estate of Eileen Hatton said that products like ZaZa, Tianaa, TD and Pegasus are known as "gas station heroin," because they are freely sold in smoke shops and gas stations, despite having no U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorization, and in fact the FDA has warned against their use.

The suit names as defendants importers, makers and distributors of tianeptine products, including MRSS Inc., Karmagreen LLC, Premier Manufacturing Products LLC and several smoke shops and gas stations.

MRSS is facing a **similar suit** in Georgia federal court, filed in June.

According to the complaint, tianeptine is a synthetic opiate-like substance that affects the same receptors as opioids, but has a short half-life, making the effects wear off quickly, resulting in immediate and "brutal" withdrawal symptoms.

The substance has no accepted medical use in the U.S., has been banned from use in several countries, and both the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have confirmed its dangers, the complaint says, with the FDA issuing warning letters to at least one of the defendants named in this suit that the products are illegally marketed.

According to the complaint, the FDA in November 2023 warned consumers not to purchase or use tianeptine, the Drug Enforcement Administration identified it as a public health threat in 2024, and several states have classified it as a Schedule I or Schedule II controlled substance, with Pennsylvania state Sen. Doug Mastriano saying in June he intended to introduce legislation to do likewise.

Despite this, the defendants sell and market the products as healthy, "all natural," diet supplements, some with packaging similar to energy drinks, but without warning about any of the dangers of the products.

"In effect, defendants are drug dealers cloaked in the language and imagery of the wellness industry, pushing a dangerous opioid under the false label of a supplement," the estate said in the complaint.

Hatton's use began in August 2023, according to the complaint. She used it to help end her Percocet addiction but developed tolerance and dependence, and went from using it casually to consuming at least one full bottle of tianeptine products per day to satisfy the addiction, the complaint says.

She was found dead outside her mother's home on May 8, 2025, and toxicology testing confirmed that tianeptine caused her death, according to the complaint.

The suit includes claims for product liability, negligence, breach of warranty, negligent and reckless misrepresentation and false or misleading advertising.

Frank Mangiaracina of Kline & Specter PC said Tuesday, "Eileen Hatton's death was sad, tragic, and

entirely preventable, and accountability is essential to stop these companies from continuing to profit off addiction and putting more families at risk."

Representatives for the defendants could not immediately be reached for comment Tuesday.

The estate is represented by Thomas R. Kline, Frank Mangiaracina and Michael A. Cavaliere of Kline & Specter PC.

Counsel information for the defendants was not available Tuesday.

The case is Hatton v. MRSS Inc. et al., case number 251202456, in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

--Additional reporting by Kelcey Caulder. Editing by Linda Voorhis.