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Longtime Hogan Lovells Partner Jumps To Mayer Brown In DC

By **Jack Rodgers**

Law360 (August 17, 2022, 12:26 PM EDT) -- Mayer Brown LLP has added a longtime Hogan Lovells partner to its corporate and securities practice who focuses on matters related to products regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the firm announced Tuesday.

George O'Brien

George O'Brien spent almost 15 years at Hogan Lovells, working with that firm's FDA pharmaceutical and biotechnology regulatory practice, according to his LinkedIn profile. He spent 12 years as an associate, before being promoted to partner at Hogan Lovells in 2020.

O'Brien joins Mayer Brown's corporate and securities practice in Washington as a partner, working with a number of food and beverage and life sciences clients, whose products are FDA regulated, the firm said. He's managed a number of FDA regulatory issues, including disputes affecting drugs, biologics, medical foods and over-the-counter CBD products.

In an email to Law360 Pulse Wednesday, O'Brien said he enjoyed his time at Hogan Lovells, but was drawn to Mayer Brown's resources, talented attorneys and global platform and commitment to expanding the firm's FDA regulatory abilities. One of the largest issues he now faces while representing his life sciences clients, is the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic on the FDA.

"This has affected almost every aspect of the development of, for example, pharmaceutical and biotechnology products: submission of emergency use authorizations, supply chain issues, difficulties in enrolling clinical trials, delayed or remote inspections, to name a few," he said. "FDA has responded heroically to increased demands and the challenge of remote working to navigate through this unprecedented period, in part owing to increased flexibility and nimbleness from the agency."

He added: "Whether the changes and adaptations we have seen from FDA in the past two plus years will continue going forward remains to be seen."

O'Brien helps life sciences clients obtain market approval for FDA-regulated products, including pharmaceuticals and biologics technologies from companies in those industries, the firm said. He has additional experience with the Hatch-Waxman Act, orphan drug and pediatric exclusivities and other FDA-related exclusivities for specific products, the firm said.

O'Brien has drafted a number of citizen petitions for life sciences clients on bioequivalence, labeling and approval for generic drugs and 180-day exclusivities, the firm said.

Liz Stern, who manages Mayer Brown's Washington office, said in a statement that O'Brien's experience would be essential for the firm's

clients.

"George's deep FDA expertise will be a terrific addition to so many aspects of our work for our life sciences and food and beverage clients and adds further depth to our excellent regulatory and transactional capabilities across our global platform," she said.

Reb Wheeler, who co-leads the firm's global life sciences group and leads the firm's New York corporate and securities practice, said in a statement that O'Brien's joining was part of Mayer Brown's expansion of the life sciences group.

"We are delighted to have George join our team," he said. "Expanding our life sciences capabilities is a strategic priority for the firm. With George's broad experience in FDA regulatory matters, he will add considerable value to many aspects of our work."

O'Brien is a former member of the Food and Drug Law Institute's Drugs & Biologics Committee and regularly speaks to the group at its annual conference, and at other venues, the firm said.

O'Brien holds a master's degree in French literature from the University of Pennsylvania and studied English and French at Dartmouth College while pursuing his undergraduate degree. He earned his law degree from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, according to his LinkedIn profile.

O'Brien added that one of the most-rewarding aspects of his practice was getting to assist innovator companies to develop orphan drugs for rare diseases.

"These companies run the gamut from the largest global pharma and biotech companies to emerging companies seeking to obtain approval of their first product, but they are all focused on bringing novel treatments to patients that may have few or no available therapies," he said. "As orphan drugs have become such a large industry and agency focus - more than 50 percent of the novel drugs and biologics approved by FDA in 2021 for example - their development can touch on any number of issues at the FDA, including clinical trials, real world evidence and exclusivity challenges."

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.

Update: this article has been updated with original comments from O'Brien.
