

MVP: Gibson Dunn's Geoffrey Sigler

By Adam Lidgett

Law360 (September 9, 2022, 2:02 PM EDT) -- Geoffrey Sigler of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP has assisted UnitedHealth Group-related entities in various lawsuits over the past year, including helping its behavioral health unit unravel a pair of major California federal court orders in a case over substance abuse and mental health treatments, earning him a spot among Law360's 2022 Health Care MVPs.

HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR:

Sigler worked on numerous cases involving UnitedHealth entities, including one in which the Ninth Circuit in March blocked lower court orders that had required United Behavioral Health to reprocess a slew of claims for mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

Additionally, he represented Golden Rule Insurance Co. — which UnitedHealth has acquired — in a suit over insurance-related claims and also helped United Behavioral Health in another case that saw a judge trim claims against it related to mental health services, the firm said.

"Obviously as a litigator, you're always trying to win the case, but in each of those cases, there was just a fantastic team," Sigler said, noting that he worked with lawyers at his own firm as well as with in-house counsel. "The process of getting there was its own pleasant, rewarding experience."

HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE OVER THE PAST YEAR:

Sigler said his biggest challenge of this year was focusing on both work and family-life balance.

"Our litigation team is fortunate to be in high demand, and I've worked extremely hard for many years to build expertise and teams to meet this demand, which is a wonderful position to be in from a professional standpoint," Sigler said. "But I also have a family with their own interests and commitments, and balancing those commitments, particularly in light of the blending of the work and family spheres over the past few years, remains the biggest challenge."

WHY HE'S A HEALTH CARE ATTORNEY:



Sigler said that early on in his legal career, he became part of a team of litigators at Gibson Dunn that represented Aetna in various cases.

He said he became very knowledgeable about various aspects of the industry, such as its issues and dynamics.

"As I got to know this area, I really grew to like it and over time my experience in the area deepened," he said. "Still today, I litigate a variety of cases in different industries, but the health care industry is so dynamic and poses such complex legal issues that I suspect it will always be a focus area for me."

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM

Sigler said winning cases is his motivation, but he added that he tries "to focus not just on winning, but on doing so in a way that makes the client and the case team feel good about the process of getting there."

However, he added, what is most important isn't that simple.

"Litigating a big case involves a lot of different people and they all want to win, but they also have other interests and concerns that are also important to them," he said. "In-house lawyers want to understand what's going on and support their business clients, associates want good professional experiences, and everyone wants to like and enjoy going to work every day."

ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:

"Focus on getting the balance that's best for you in terms of having a diverse work experience, and at the same time making a sufficient investment in a particular client, area or group of colleagues so that you can get the most out of that experience," Sigler said.

Sigler said that some of the most rewarding and valuable experiences as a lawyer are the product of making that kind of investment and having it pay off over time.

— *As told to Adam Lidgett.*

Law360's MVPs of the Year are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals, and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2022 MVP winners after reviewing more than 900 submissions.
