



Kimberly-Clark faces \$500 million suit over Ebola protection gown

BY **SIDDHARTH CAVALE**

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(Reuters) - A Southern California law firm has sued [Kimberly-Clark Corp](#) for more than \$500 million, alleging that the Kleenex tissue maker committed fraud by [marketing](#) and selling some of its surgical gowns as protection against Ebola.

Law firm Eagan Avenatti said it filed a class-action lawsuit in a Los Angeles court on Wednesday, stating that Kimberly-Clark had falsely represented to health regulators and healthcare workers that its "MICROCOOL Breathable High Performance Surgical Gowns" are impermeable and provide protection against Ebola.

The law firm said the gowns had failed industry tests and did not meet relevant standards for protection against the disease, placing healthcare workers and patients at "considerable risk".

"We anticipate seeking over \$500 million (in damages), which represents at a minimum the amount of revenue that KMB has received from the sales of these gowns," lead attorney Michael Avenatti told Reuters.

A Kimberly-Clark spokesman declined to comment, saying the company does not speak on litigation-related issues.

The gowns are manufactured by the company's healthcare business, Kimberly-Clark Health Care, which is being spun off into a separate company to be called Halyard Health.

Avenatti said the company had sold millions of these gowns since it was brought to the market in 2011.

"Kimberly-Clark needs to immediately recall these gowns and come clean with the FDA, CDC, healthcare professionals and the general public," Avenatti said in a statement.

"The risks associated with continued concealment of the truth are far too great."

The lawsuit is brought on behalf of lead plaintiff and surgeon Hrayr Shahinian and 500,000

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the healthcare business, which also sells surgical masks and catheters, will start trading on the New York Stock Exchange on Monday.

Kimberly shares were little changed on Thursday.

(Reporting by Siddharth Cavale in Bangalore; Editing by Simon Jennings and Saumyadeb Chakrabarty)

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