

Former FDA Chief Counsel Rejoins Sidley as Practice Leader in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca “Becky” Wood, former chief counsel to the Food and Drug Administration, has rejoined Sidley Austin LLP as a partner.

The firm announced Wood will co-lead both the firm’s Food, Drug, and Medical Device Regulatory practice and its FDA group in Washington with partner Coleen Klasmeier.

Wood previously served as Chief Counsel to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Associate General Counsel in the Office of the General Counsel, Department of Health & Human Services. She will focus her practice on providing counsel on a wide range of contentious and non-contentious FDA regulatory and litigation issues to clients in the life sciences industry and private equity firms investing in the area.

In her role as Chief Counsel to the FDA, Wood served on Commissioner Scott Gottlieb’s leadership team. She was the principal legal advisor on major initiatives, including efforts to streamline the drug and device development and approval process, modernize the agency’s regulatory framework, combat addiction to opioids and nicotine, enhance the product safety and labeling of food and medical products, and address drug pricing. She served as a liaison to the Department of Justice and the White House and advised agency leadership on legislative matters. She also focused on First Amendment and preemption issues.

“We are delighted that Becky is rejoining us,” said Klasmeier. “Regulatory insight is at the core of our life sciences practice. Based on both her long experience in the industry

and her role as the lead legal advisor to the FDA during a transformational period, Becky will enhance our ability to offer deep strategic insight into the complex regulatory issues facing our clients and to defend our clients' conduct when challenged. Becky's perspective on the rapidly changing regulatory environment is unique."

Prior to joining the FDA in 2017, Wood served as a partner at Sidley for more than a decade. She focused her practice on district court and appellate litigation arising under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the United States Constitution, including managing class actions and multi-plaintiff cases. Earlier in her career, she served as a law clerk to Judge Pasco M. Bowman II of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

"Becky is an extraordinarily accomplished litigator," said Mark Hopson, global co-chair of Sidley's litigation practice and managing partner of the Washington, D.C. office. "The intersection of her premier regulatory and litigation practices will greatly bolster the firm's capabilities to help clients across a wide spectrum of legal areas."