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Former FDA Official Joins Morgan Lewis In DC

By **Alison Knezevich**

Law360 (June 1, 2023, 3:55 PM EDT) -- Morgan Lewis has strengthened its health care capabilities in Washington, D.C., with the addition of a former senior policy and regulatory official at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the law firm announced Thursday.


Maarika Kimbrell

Maarika Kimbrell joins Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP as a partner in the FDA and health care practice, where she will counsel pharmaceutical and biotech companies on regulatory matters, the firm said in a statement.

Kimbrell most recently served as director of the FDA's Office of New Drug Policy, which she co-founded. The office has about three dozen staffers, including doctors and attorneys, and is part of the Office of New Drugs in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

Her previous positions at the agency included serving as deputy chief of staff to ex-FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, a role that entailed advising on policies involving drug products, pricing and access. Earlier at the FDA, she focused on issues related to the development and regulation of generic drugs.

Before she joined the agency in 2014, Kimbrell worked at Covington & Burling LLP and Morrison Foerster LLP.

Kimbrell told Law360 Pulse on Thursday that in returning to private practice, "it was very important to me that that firm have a top-notch FDA/health care practice," as well as a broader life sciences practice.

She added that during the interview process, she learned about Morgan Lewis' "deeply collaborative nature, and the culture of the firm is one that I think will fit well with my own personality."

The firm's leaders said Kimbrell's experience will be an asset to its clients.

"Her ability to distill and provide insight into complex scientific, regulatory, and legal issues to develop strategic solutions to multifaceted global issues will be key in helping our clients stay on top of and respond to developments that impact their businesses," Kathleen Sanzo, who leads Morgan Lewis' FDA and health care practice, said in the statement Thursday.

Kimbrell left the federal government in May, she said.

During the pandemic, Kimbrell helped shape policies related to the FDA's emergency use authorities, including the development of the Coronavirus Treatment Acceleration Program, Morgan Lewis stated.

Kimbrell told Law360 Pulse that after studying science in college, she entered a Ph.D. program in genetics. But in graduate school, "I realized that I really loved learning about science more than I actually liked doing science," she said.

"And I loved learning about other people doing science, and so I started to think about what would be a good way to be able to continue that in my career," Kimbrell added, explaining how she ended up switching gears and going to law school.

She graduated from law school at Yale University, where she also earned a master's degree in genetics. She earned a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University.

--Editing by Covey Son.
