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ALM

\$1.5M for Medical Malpractice

Siani v. Ulanet: The estate of a woman who suffered cardiac arrest after an operation and died after four years in a coma settled its Monmouth County suit against the anesthesiologist for \$1.5 million on July 6.

Awilda Rodriguez, 67, of Red Bank, who had a history of diabetes, coronary artery disease and hypertension, underwent laproscopic surgery for gastric reflux at Monmouth Medical Center on Nov. 14, 2002.

After post-operative removal of heart, pulse and blood pressure monitors, Rodriguez went into cardiac arrest and a coma. The estate's lawyer, Bruce Nagel of Nagel & Rice in Roseland, alleged that anesthesiologist Seth Ulanet reacted too slowly, particularly in reconnecting the cardiac monitor.

Besides Rodriguez's damages for pain and suffering, her family suffered from the loss of her companionship, the suit said.

Defense lawyer Richard Amdur of Amdur Maggs & Shor in Oakhurst could not be reached for comment.

According to a defense expert report, the patient's prior conditions put her at risk and she had been warned of the dangers. Ulanet's steps, starting with an almost immediate administration of oxygen, were correct, the expert said. The outcome would have been the same even if the cardiac monitor had been in place all along, according to the defense expert.

— By Henry Gottlieb



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SUMMARIES
WITH TRIAL
ANALYSIS

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\$1,500,000 RECOVERY – MEDICAL MALPRACTICE – FAILURE OF ANESTHESIOLOGIST TO ADEQUATELY MONITOR SUGAR LEVELS BEFORE AND DURING ELECTIVE LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY TO TREAT GIRD SUFFERED BY DIABETIC PATIENT – FAILURE TO TAKE ADEQUATE RESCUSSITATIVE STEPS AFTER PATIENT IS NON-RESPONSIVE AT CONCLUSION OF SURGERY – DEATH OF 68-YEAR-OLD WOMAN – NO INCOME LOSS – DECEDENT LEAVES HUSBAND AND TWO ADULT CHILDREN – LOSS OF GUIDANCE AND ADVICE - HEDONIC DAMAGES.

Monmouth County, New Jersey.

In this action, the plaintiff contended that the defendant anesthesiologist negligently failed to adequately monitor the blood sugar of the 68-year-old patient before and during elective laparoscopic surgery to treat gastric reflux disease. The plaintiff also contended that, once it became evident at the close of surgery that the patient was non-responsive, the defendant negligently failed to immediately react and use equipment, including the blood pressure cuff and cardiac monitor. The plaintiff maintained that, as a result, the patient suffered cardiac arrest and

fell into a coma. The patient died approximately four years later without regaining consciousness. The decedent left a husband and two adult children. She was not working outside the home.

The case settled prior to trial for \$1,500,000.

REFERENCE

Plt: Sinci, 7-07.

Attorneys for plaintiff: Bruce H. Nagel, Andrew L. O'Connor and Robert H. Solomon of Nagel Rice, LLP in Roseland, NJ.