

Woman paralyzed---Lawsuits filed against Alexian Brothers Medical Center, Dr. Konstantin Slavin and Claremont Rehabilitation

Chicago---Steven M. Levin of the Chicago law firm Levin & Perconti filed two lawsuits in the Circuit Court of Cook County on behalf of Marie Johnson. One lawsuit was filed against Alexian Brothers Medical Center (Elk Grove Village) and Konstantin Slavin, M.D., a physician employed by Alexian Brothers. The second suit was filed against Claremont Extended Healthcare, LLC, d/b/a Claremont Rehabilitation Center (Buffalo Grove).

Seventy-eight year old Marie Johnson had a history of lower back pain. Initially, her doctors implanted a pump to administer pain medication. In March 2007, when her pain continued, she was referred to neurosurgeon Dr. Konstantin Slavin. When Marie went to see Dr. Slavin, he recommended a reinsertion of the catheter to improve pain relief. The complaint alleges that during that surgery and while he was inserting a needle to guide the placement of the catheter, Dr. Slavin encountered an obstruction.

Attorney Steven Levin explained what happened next, "Rather than stopping the procedure to determine the cause of the obstruction, Dr. Slavin continued to apply pressure and to force the needle into Marie's spine. In doing so, he damaged Marie's spinal cord which rendered her a paraplegic, unable to feel anything from her waist down."

The complaint alleges that even though Dr. Slavin was aware of Marie's pre-existing spinal condition, he failed to perform a proper assessment to determine whether the procedure to insert the catheter was too risky. The complaint further alleges that Dr. Slavin failed to adequately monitor Marie's condition during surgery and take appropriate precautions when he encountered an obstruction. As a result, Marie's spinal cord was severely damaged, paralyzing her from the waist down.

Levin added, "Because of her disability, Marie had to be admitted to a nursing home.

She could no longer care for herself.”

Marie entered Claremont Rehabilitation Center on April 16, 2007. Marie’s children, Palatine residents Kathy Yetka, Kristina Healy, and Ronald Johnson and Kim Stahulak (St. Charles) trusted Claremont to provide for their mother’s total needs.

When Marie was admitted to Claremont, she was totally dependent upon their staff for assistance with activities of daily living. Marie needed help transferring from her bed to her wheelchair, turning and repositioning in her bed and keeping her skin clean to prevent the development of dangerous bed sores.

Steven Levin said, “In only four weeks of residency, Claremont failed to provide necessary care to Marie. While in their care, Marie developed multiple bed sores on her lower extremities, including her right hip and sacrum. The pressure sores became so deep and infected that Marie had to be hospitalized for surgical debridements and undergo surgery to remove muscle from her leg to close the sore on her sacrum. After Marie’s hospitalization, she was released to the care of her family and home health care nurses who have managed to restore her skin to health.”

Levin continued, “Had the Claremont staff monitored Marie’s skin condition and turned her often enough to relieve prolonged pressure on various parts of her skin, she would not have suffered from unnecessary pressure sores.”

Steven Levin concluded, “Sadly, Marie and her family first placed their trust in Dr. Slavin and Alexian Brothers Medical Center to provide safe and appropriate treatment for Marie’s back pain. After she was rendered disabled, Marie trusted Claremont to care for her when she was most vulnerable and could not care for herself. Both institutions failed her and her family.”