



\$1 million settlement in Libertyville nursing home case

By Russell Lissau | Daily Herald Staff

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The relatives of a woman who died after repeatedly falling at the county-run nursing home in Libertyville will receive \$1 million under a newly finalized settlement, their attorney announced Thursday.

The case, prompted by the 2005 death of 83-year-old Helen Menneke at Winchester House, was settled out of court after mediation. Circuit Court Christopher Starck approved the settlement Wednesday.

Attorney Susan Novosad called the figure the largest nursing home negligence settlement in county history.

Lake County Administrator Barry Burton referred questions about the case to the Chief Deputy State's Attorney Meg Marcouiller, who oversees the civil division. She could not be reached for comment.

Menneke, formerly of Mundelein, was admitted to Winchester House in January 2004, suffering from dementia, Novosad said.

She fell several times over the course of the year, suffering a brain injury and broken bones, Novosad said. After one such fall, nurses implemented an alarm system for beds and wheelchairs, Novosad said.

Injuries from a final fall in December 2004 required surgery, and Menneke died in January 2005.

After Menneke's death, Winchester House instituted new policies requiring staff to more frequently check patients' wheelchair and bed alarms to ensure they're working properly, Novosad said.

The lawsuit was filed in 2005 by Menneke's widower and children.

"The family was outraged that this happened to their relative," Novosad said. "(They) didn't want this to happen to anybody else."