

Big award to family in death of woman

Nursing home told to pay \$2.9 million

By Michael Higgins
Tribune staff reporter

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A Cook County jury has awarded \$2.9 million to the family of a woman who suffocated in 2001 after nursing-home staffers failed to properly clean her breathing tube.

Ana Carrasco, 57, of Chicago had been treated successfully for throat cancer but needed to spend about two weeks in a nursing home before she could go home with her daughter, the family's attorney, Steven Levin, said Wednesday.

Carrasco stayed at ManorCare Health Services in Homewood.

"All they had to do is clean and suction the [tube], which is basic, fundamental care," Levin said.

But Carrasco's family alleged that the nursing home didn't provide enough staffers or properly train its staff. They also didn't provide proper medication and equipment, according to the lawsuit.

ManorCare officials conceded they were liable and the case proceeded to trial to determine damages, Levin said.

The jury heard three days of testimony before returning a verdict on Friday.

The award was the largest for a death at a nursing home in Cook County, Levin said.

"Typically what goes wrong in nursing homes is not the fault of the staff," Levin said. "It's the fault of the owners for providing insufficient resources. ... Hopefully this will be a lesson to the industry."

Tim McVey, an attorney for ManorCare, referred questions to the company. Company officials could not be reached.

Carrasco's daughter, Sheila Albores, who brought the suit on behalf of her mother's estate, has testified before the state lawmakers regarding the need for better care in the state's nursing homes, Levin said.

mjhiggins@tribune.com