

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

Lawsuit over undiagnosed tumor settles for \$4.5 million

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A woman who filed a lawsuit after medical staff failed to recognize an adrenal gland tumor has settled her claim for \$4.5 million.

Heather Kornick was 19 years old in 2006 when she visited Dr. Laurence Jacobs to report irregular menstrual periods, abdominal weight gain, facial weight gain and abnormal emotional responses.

The suit accused Jacobs, a reproductive endocrinologist, of failing to take a thorough medical history; perform a physical exam; track Kornick's weight gain and blood pressure; diagnose Cushing's syndrome; and diagnose the adrenal gland tumor.

The suit also accused nurses of failing to tell Jacobs about symptoms expressed by Kornick's mother.

While treating Kornick for more than a year, Jacobs diagnosed her with polycystic ovary syndrome – which she didn't have.

As a result, Kornick's tumor went undiagnosed and untreated from December 2006 to May 2008. Cancer was also found in her lungs and liver.

The suit alleged that Kornick could have avoided chemotherapy and the cancer would have been easier to treat if she was diagnosed sooner.

As a result of the cancer, Kornick has a diminished life expectancy. When the symptoms started, she was a college student at Indiana University.

Kornick was represented by [Jeffrey E. Martin](#) and [John J. Perconti](#) of Levin & Perconti.

"They took a girl who had a condition which could have been cured or at a minimum, treated much more easily, to one whose condition gives her a very low chance of survival," Martin said. "The fact that she is alive today, the doctors have told her she is a medical miracle for surviving this long."...

"The fact that Heather is still alive, that shows that statistically she would have been one of the people that would have done better assuming an earlier diagnosis. That's the sad part of this case," Martin said.

All defendants were represented by [Richard H. Donohue](#) and [Tanya E. Poth](#) of Donohue, Brown, Mathewson & Smyth LLC.

The company that employed the nurses was also represented by [Richard T. Greenberg](#) and [Kathleen M. Cunniff](#) of McGuireWoods LLP.

Donohue called it a "tragic case."

"The fact is, a tumor like this in a young woman her age is almost unheard of," Donohue said. "It's very rare."

After depositions, the parties reached the settlement through mediation this month with [Donald P. O'Connell](#).

The case is *Heather Kornick v. Laurence A. Jacobs, et al.*, No. 09 L 465.