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Levin & Perconti obtains a \$1,169,000 verdict in medical negligence lawsuit

CHICAGO - November 23, 2015 – Friday afternoon, a Cook County jury awarded a \$1,169,000 verdict to the surviving family of 84-year-old Rose Lasko in a medical negligence lawsuit against Dr. John Fultz. Attorneys Jordan Powell (partner), Jaime Koziol (associate), and Michael Shanahan (associate) of Levin & Perconti represented the family.

On February 6, 2006, Lasko was taken to Rush North Shore Hospital after she fell at home and broke her ankle. Her injury was surgically repaired and she was transferred to Lincolnwood Place Nursing Home for rehabilitation. The patient’s attending physician, Dr. John Fultz, was responsible for Lasko’s care. He was aware that she had atrial fibrillation, a heart condition which places her at risk for an embolic stroke. Ms. Lasko had been on Coumadin for this condition for two years prior to her admission to Lincolnwood Place, to prevent blood clots from forming.

An INR test, which measures the therapeutic level of Coumadin, was performed and revealed that Lasko’s blood was extremely thin, placing her at high risk for bleeding. Dr. Fultz stopped her Coumadin and continued to repeat INR tests to monitor her levels. However, Dr. Fultz never restarted the Coumadin. Then, a couple of weeks later, a test showed that Coumadin was no longer in her system, significantly increasing her risk for an embolic stroke. Dr. Fultz again failed to place an order for Lasko to resume Coumadin, despite the fact that it is needed to prevent clot formation and potential stroke. On April 26, Lasko had a stroke and was taken to Skokie Hospital. After the stroke, she never returned to independent living and lived the last 4 years of her life in a nursing home.

“Dr. Fultz was found negligent by the jury in failing to adequately monitor and respond to Lasko’s abnormal INR levels and order Coumadin to prevent a stroke,” stated Attorney Powell. “Although Coumadin can be a dangerous drug if levels are not closely monitored, Rose Lasko’s risk for bleeding did not outweigh her risk for stroke.”

“Rose was never the same after the stroke,” stated Attorney Koziol. “She struggled to communicate, no longer had short term memory, and was wheelchair bound for the rest of her life. Her hopes in returning home after making significant progress in therapy were destroyed by Dr. Fultz’s mistake. She lived an additional four years, without really living. She had several hospitalizations following her stroke due to complications, which eventually led to her death.”

The suit was filed in 2010. The Honorable Jeffrey Lawrence of the Circuit Court of Cook County presided over the trial, which began on November 10, with closing arguments on November 20. During the course of the trial, the jury heard testimony from 7 witnesses. The jury delivered their decision to the judge on November 20 after 1.5 hours of deliberation, including lunch.

Levin & Perconti is a nationally-renowned Chicago law firm representing clients throughout Illinois in all types of personal injury, medical malpractice, and wrongful death litigation. The lawyers at Levin & Perconti are committed to protecting and vindicating the rights of people who are injured by the negligence of others. Please contact the firm at (312) 332-2872 or visit www.levinperconti.com for more information.

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