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Was Tumor Lost Before Biopsy?

CHICAGO -- A north suburban family says they will never know for certain if a tumor removed from a young woman two years ago was cancerous, since Children's Memorial Hospital lost the tumor.

A negligence lawsuit filed in Cook County Circuit Court on behalf of Kara Morris of Highland Park says after having surgery in October of 2006 to remove a tumor encased in her thyroid, Children's lost the tumor before performing a biopsy to determine if it was cancerous.

Kara was 16 at the time of the surgery, according to a release from the law firm of Levin and Perconti, which filed the lawsuit. A week after the surgery, when Kara and her family returned to the hospital to receive the biopsy results, the hospital told them that because they lost the sample, no biopsy could be performed and no determination could be made as to whether or not it was cancerous.

"We were in shock," Kara's mother, Charlene, said. "We could not believe that the hospital we trusted to care for our daughter lost the tumor removed from her body. The tumor held all of our answers, and without it, we will never know whether she has cancer. We brought this case against Children's Memorial so that other families do not have to go through what we are facing."

Kara is a freshman at the University of Michigan. "There isn't a day that goes by when I'm not thinking about it," she said. She undergoes ultrasounds every six months to monitor her thyroid to ensure there is no new growth or changes. In addition to the stress of the situation, the suit contends, Kara will most likely face great difficulties obtaining individual insurance as she moves into adulthood because of her uncertain health status.

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