



Illinois Medical Malpractice Victims

Bob Carmody

**Wife: Jeanine, deceased
Chicago, Illinois**



Bob's wife, Jeanine, died of an overdose of Vicodin ES immediately following surgery in 1999, after her doctor prescribed 2.5 times the maximum dosage. The case against the doctor was settled. The case against the pharmacist is pending.

Terri Furlong

**Mother: Carolyn
Benton, IL**

In 2004, Terri's 69-year-old mother, Carolyn, was given an IV as part of her treatment while hospitalized after a stroke. For the next two days, she complained of severe foot pain. Her complaints were not addressed, until it was discovered that the IV was not properly inserted in the vein, causing a severe infection in her foot. By that time, the infection was so severe that she had to have three-quarters of her foot amputated to keep it from spreading. Her case against the hospital is pending.

Elie Ghawi

St. Charles, Illinois

Elie had suffered with right-sided Trigeminal Neuralgia (a disorder of the brain that causes intense pain in the nerves of the face) for several years when the daily medications he had been prescribed stopped working. His neurologist increased his dosage, at which point the medications began to cause disabling side effects. In August 2003 it was decided that microvascular decompression surgery was the appropriate course of action. Unfortunately, the neurosurgeon

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who performed the operation made an incision on the *left side* of Elie's head, exposing the wrong trigeminal nerve root. The surgeon then went back and performed the surgery on the correct (right) nerve. The unnecessary incision has caused Elie an intense amount of pain and a significantly longer rehabilitation period. The case against the doctor is pending.

Donna D. Harnett

Son: Martin

Chicago, Illinois



When Donna was in labor with her son, Martin, and went to the hospital (where she was not admitted until 5 hours after her arrival), she was put on pitocin to speed up her dilation and contractions. In an effort to further speed labor, the doctor broke her water, which was thick and green from meconium. Rather than consider a C-section, they continued the pitocin. After laboring an additional 6 hours or so, her son's fetal monitoring alarm started going off in succession. The doctor came and called for an emergency C-section, but then waited an hour. During the delay itself, they failed to give Donna oxygen or an IV, or to move her on her side. Upon delivery, her son was whisked away to the Intensive Care Unit, where he stayed for 3 weeks, initially on a respirator. He has substantial brain damage and cerebral palsy as a result of the failure to timely deliver. Several months later the doctor sent her to a reproductive geneticist (a friend of the doctor) who told her to never have anymore more children because they would all turn out the same due to a problem with her DNA. She had three more healthy sons. Her case settled.

Melba Perry

Husband: Bobbie, deceased

Elgin, Illinois

Melba's husband, Bobbie, went to the doctor repeatedly over a three-year period, complaining of stomach pains associated with his bowel movements and loose stool. His doctor told him that it was a symptom of Parkinson's disease, a condition with which he had been previously diagnosed. Only after years of complaints did the doctor finally have him take a stool test, in which blood was discovered. He was then referred to a gastroenterologist for a colonoscopy. The test showed that a polyp had developed in his colon – apparently years earlier – turned cancerous, and spread to his bones. He died of colon cancer three years later at the age of 68. The case is pending.

Tammy Schilt**West Salem, Illinois**

Tammy gave birth to her son, Kelsey, on February 20, 1990. After Kelsey was born, Tammy suffered from fevers and extreme pain which was repeatedly dismissed as the "baby blues." After about 5 months, she got sick and was taken to the hospital where x-rays revealed that a sponge was left inside of her during the delivery. This caused severe infections and pain and required a 6 hour surgery. Tammy needed a colostomy for 6 months, and has since suffered from several hernias and infections. Due to the condition that she was in, she was unable to take care of her newborn son for 10 months, a very painful experience, and also has since had to explain to Kelsey that all that was going on medically and legally was not his fault. She settled her case against the hospital and nurses.

Beth Sheff**Husband: Chris, deceased****Auburn, IL**

In 2000, Beth's 36-year-old husband, Chris, went to the emergency room with chest pains on his left-side. The doctor diagnosed him with right-side muscle strains. Beth, who works in an emergency room performing autopsies, requested an x-ray and blood work but the tests were refused and Chris was sent him home with pain killers and muscle relaxants. Chris died of a heart attack four days later. An autopsy revealed that a right coronary artery was blocked and his heart was 3 times the size it should have been, something that could have been noticed with an x-ray. The case was settled.

Mary Steinberg**Husband: Glenn, deceased****Chicago, Illinois**

In early 2004, Mary's 62-year-old husband, Glenn, went into surgery to remove a malignant tumor in his abdomen. Ten days after surgery, while still in the hospital, he was having gastrointestinal problems. When doctors did an x-ray of his abdomen, they found a four-inch metal retractor lodged against his intestine. A second surgery was preformed to remove the metal piece, during which Glenn's lungs aspirated. He died later that night. The case against the doctors and hospital is still pending.

Debi Surlas
Aurora, Illinois



51-year-old Debi Surlas is blind in her left eye and has compromised vision in her right eye after an ophthalmologist and a hospital misdiagnosed her diabetic eye disease as glaucoma. She was originally misdiagnosed in August 1988. She was correctly diagnosed 18 months later by a different doctor. Had her disease, diabetic retinopathy, been correctly diagnosed, there were available treatments that almost certainly would have saved her vision. She has had hemorrhages in both eyes and has had multiple operations. She previously worked as a clinical nurse auditor. The ophthalmologist and hospital were both found negligent, and the entire jury award was in the form of non-economic damages.

Fred Tetreault – Kankakee, Illinois
Suzanne Cervantes – Matteson, Illinois
Mother: Sharon, deceased

A physician failed to properly diagnose Fred and Suzanne's mother, Sharon Tetreault, with uterine cancer. For over a year, while Sharon repeatedly expressed concerns to her doctor about her ongoing symptoms, including vaginal bleeding, he repeatedly assured her that she did not need to see a gynecologist and, instead, continued prescribing estrogen medications, despite the drug manufacturer's strong warnings that such misuse of the drug could cause or accelerate uterine cancer. When he finally referred her to a gynecologist, one year after the onset of symptoms, her cancer was at Stage 4 (the most advanced stage) and had spread to her lymph nodes. Sharon died of uterine cancer in July 2000, one week after her 58th birthday. The case against the doctor was settled.

Pamela Thomas
Husband: James, deceased
Illiopolis, Illinois

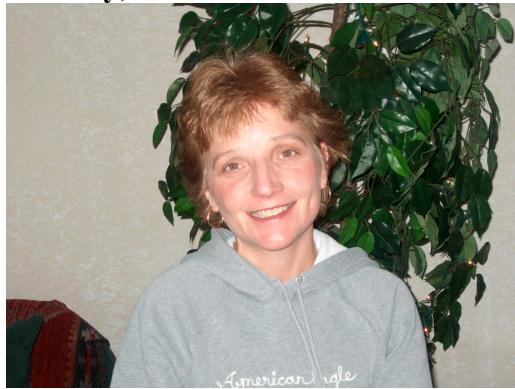
In 2001, Pamela's husband, James, was being treated for a broken nose that occurred after falling off his bicycle. While in the hospital, he was administered 100 times the appropriate dosage of epinephrine. He died of an overdose of epinephrine eight hours after his treatment. The cases against the doctor and the hospital were settled.

Lisa Tsoutsas
Norwood Park, Illinois



On June 5, 1999, immediately following liposuction, Lisa became sick with fever and vomiting. Despite several phone calls to her surgeon reporting her symptoms, it was not until two days later, on June 7, that she was taken to a hospital and then transferred in critical condition by helicopter to an ICU burn unit on June 8 because she was infected with a flesh-eating bacteria at every one of the liposuction sites. She remained hospitalized for two months, part of the time in a medically-induced coma. As a result the infection, she lost the flesh over 60% of her body and she had open wounds over 90% of her body due to extensive skin grafting. In her lawsuit, it was alleged that the surgical instruments used were not sterile. Lisa has had thirteen more surgeries in an attempt to correct the extensive scarring from the tissue loss. The case was settled. According to an interview with the surgeon in *Crain's Chicago Business*, he settled ten medical malpractice cases with payments to patients, including Lisa's case, as of June 2004. The article also states that the state "has been investigating at least one complaint against [the doctor] since 1997, without any charges or resolution."

Georgiann Ursch
Godfrey, IL



When Georgiann was 37, she discovered a small lump in her right breast through self examination. A base line mammogram had not detected the lump. However her ob/gyn ordered a sonogram. After the sonogram, the doctor recommended she see a surgeon for a biopsy. The surgeon felt there was no need for the biopsy and doing so would be a waste of her time. The

surgeon advised monitoring the lump for 3 more months. After the 3 months, Georgiann returned with a feeling the lump had changed. The surgeon did not agree and still refused to conduct a biopsy. Once again she said monitor it for 3 more months. Georgiann then decided to have a second mammogram done on her own to see if the lump would show some change. Once again, the lump did not show. However, the lab tech and the radiologist told her that this type of lump could not be diagnosed without a biopsy and urged her to demand a biopsy. If the surgeon would not do it, the radiologist recommended she find someone who would.

The surgeon, growing more annoyed, stated that if she conducted a biopsy for every lump a radiologist sent to her, she would be doing 20 surgeries a week and 95 percent of those would be unnecessary. Georgiann, however, demanded she do the biopsy. The surgeon was very upset with Georgiann but decided to do it to "please" her. The biopsy revealed cancer, and Georgiann felt it best to have another surgeon do the surgery, which showed a cancerous Stage II lump that had invaded several of her lymph nodes. She had a mastectomy and 9 months of chemotherapy. Her case settled.