

HIGHEST VERDICT EVER AWARDED IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Washington County, Pennsylvania May 3, 2000

Jury Holds Washington Hospital and Two Local Pediatricians Responsible for 8 Year Old Boy's Permanent Brain Damage

A Washington County jury found Washington Hospital and two local pediatricians responsible for 8 year old Ryan Taylor's permanent brain damage due to their negligent care and awarded \$17.5 million to Ryan and \$575,000 to his mother, Lori Slider, making it the highest judgement ever in Washington County and possibly the state of Pennsylvania. Plaintiffs have filed for delayed damages which could add another \$8 million to the total.

In 1994, Ryan's mother filed suit against Washington Hospital, pediatricians Edward Foley and Paul Wodlinger, and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh claiming her son, Ryan was born healthy and suffered permanent brain damage because of improper medical care by the defendants.

The first six months of Lori Slider's pregnancy was normal. However, during the final months fetal growth was delayed making the baby susceptible to hypoglycemia. On November 5, 1991, Ryan Taylor was born healthy by caesarean.

Ryan Taylor was feeding poorly his first three days and received no nutrients because he would not nurse. During this time, no doctor saw or examined him even though they knew the baby was at risk for hypoglycemic conditions because of a condition known as Utero-Placental Insufficiency his mother had while pregnant.

Finally, on November 8, three days after his birth, when Ryan turned blue, a doctor examined him and tests showed Ryan's blood sugar level at zero. At this time, Ryan was given sugar water but it was too late. Shortly after receiving the nutrients, Ryan had a seizure and was sent to Mercy Hospital where a CAT scan showed severe brain damage. The pediatricians from Washington said the CAT scan showed an old infarct that occurred in the mother's womb. But the doctors who delivered the baby testified that Ryan was healthy when he was born.

In May, 1992, six month old Ryan was brought back to Washington Hospital after having another seizure. Washington diagnosed a cortisone deficiency and prescribed cortisone. The hospital airlifted Ryan to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh. Doctors at Children's canceled the prescribed cortisone resulting in more seizures and a heart attack and ultimately more brain damage.

At trial, Washington Hospital and its pediatricians asserted that Ryan suffered damage in his mother's womb before he was born and that Children's Hospital did further damage by not administering the prescribed cortisone treatment needed to prevent infantile spasms. At the same time, Children's Hospital blamed Washington and its doctors for not treating Ryan appropriately right after he was born. When Ryan arrived at Children's Hospital in very critical condition Children's claimed that they followed the procedures necessary to save Ryan's life.

After five hours of deliberations, the jury of nine women and three men found Washington Hospital to be 70% responsible and Drs. Foley and Wodlinger each 15% responsible for Ryan's permanent brain damage due to their negligent care. The jury cleared Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

According to the jury forewoman, the jury felt the brain damage occurred because of the hypoglycemia and the most substantial factor in their decision was that Washington Hospital did not follow proper procedures. She said the jury discussions focused on damages and Children's Hospital's involvement. The jury ultimately cleared Children's Hospital because it felt that Children's Hospital saved Ryan's life.

Litigation Strategies, Ltd. provided pre-trial jury research, jury selection assistance and strategy development to plaintiff attorney Geoffrey Fieger.

- Strategic Research
- Witness Preparation
- Demonstrative Exhibits



Contact Dr. Louis Genevie at (212) 489-4949

