

Withdrawal From Alcohol: Nurses' Care Faulted, Ignored Cardiac Issues.

The patient checked into the hospital's substance abuse recovery center with a blood alcohol of .224 after reportedly drinking four quarts of liquor in the preceding seventy-two hours.

The nurses obtained orders over the phone from a physician for Valium for withdrawal symptoms as well as an EKG and blood work.

The EKG reportedly showed signs of cardiac arrhythmia and the lab work showed signs of electrolyte imbalance.

These abnormalities were apparently not communicated to the physician and no effort was made to hydrate the patient intravenously to bring his electrolytes back into balance.

Nor was a cardiologist brought in to look at the EKG and provide critical input about the patient's cardiac issues.

The hospital was dropped from the wrongful death lawsuit for a \$75,000 settlement before the jury in the Circuit Court, Cook County, Illinois returned a verdict of \$300,000 against the physician and his medical practice group. Langer v. Holy Family Med. Ctr., 2009 WL 2993913 (Cir. Ct. Cook Co., Illinois, May 15, 2009).