

# Cardiac Care: Monitor Off For Thirty Minutes, Patient Arrests, Dies.

The patient was in the hospital recovering from a percutaneous angioplasty with stenting.

The patient's status was guarded. He was still having chest pain, chest tightness and nausea and was taking sublingual nitroglycerine.

The physician's plan was to keep him in the hospital, get him out of bed for ambulation and continue working on getting his potassium level back up to normal.

## **Nurse Gave Permission To Take Off Cardiac Monitor Nurse Left the Room**

The patient asked his nurse if it was all right to take his cardiac monitor off while he went to the bathroom and got dressed.

The nurse told the patient it was all right only for the time it took him to use the bathroom.

However, the nurse then left the patient alone in his room for thirty minutes.

When the nurse returned the patient was lying on his bed. He was blue and was not breathing.

A code was called. The patient was revived and sent for a CT and then back to the cardiac catheterization lab.

Afterward all seemed well for a while. The patient lived eleven more days before succumbing to the effects of oxygen deprivation, that is, brain damage stemming from the interval from when his nurse left him alone until the code team revived him.

The widow sued the hospital in the Circuit Court, Macomb County, Michigan. The lawsuit pointed squarely at the nurse's negligence for allowing the patient to disconnect the cardiac monitor and then not staying with him or checking back right away with him to insure he had put it back on. The hospital paid a settlement of \$1,250,000. **Sebastian v. Mount Clemens General Hosp.**, 2007 WL 5158008 (Cir. Ct. Macomb Co. Michigan, June 8, 2007).