

# Cholesterol Screening: Nurse Practitioner Did Not Follow Up.

A thirty-one year-old man had his cholesterol checked at a booth at an auto racing event. It was high, so he made an appointment to see his family physician.

In the family physician's office he was twice seen by a nurse practitioner. She advised him to make lifestyle changes in his diet and exercise habits in an effort to lower his cholesterol.

According to the patient's widow, the nurse practitioner expressly said, when she asked her, that it was not necessary to start him on medication to lower his cholesterol.

---

***The patient's cholesterol was 287 and 267 on two separate occasions and he had high blood pressure.***

***The nurse practitioner advised the patient he did not need medication to lower his cholesterol.***

***Seven months later he had a fatal heart attack.***

***The jury awarded his widow \$5.1 million.***

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
WYOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
March 27, 2007

---

The jury in the Court of Common Pleas, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania faulted the nurse practitioner for not getting the patient started on cholesterol-lowering medication.

The physician was faulted for not communicating his guidelines to the nurse practitioner, that is, his practice guidelines would have indicated that this patient was a candidate for medication. **Hilliard v. McIntyre**, 2007 WL 1650357 (Ct. Com. Pl., Wyoming Co., Pennsylvania., March 27, 2007).