

Nurse Did Not Investigate Patient's Insurance: Lawsuit Thrown Out.

The Court of Appeals of Michigan threw out a convoluted lawsuit which alleged that a hospital staff nurse was responsible for a patient's death after a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

The patient checked into the hospital to have the aneurysm repaired. However, his platelet count was too low and the surgery had to wait a day or two. It was unclear if his insurance would pay for him to stay over in the hospital. The patient did not want to be billed. A nurse offered to contact his insurance, but he declined the offer and checked himself out of the hospital. Then the aneurysm burst. It was repaired but the patient died a month later from complications.

The court ruled it would violate the basic principle of medical self-determination to hold the nurse responsible for not investigating the patient's insurance coverage after the patient himself had asked her not to do so. Johnson v. Botsford General Hosp., __ N.W. 2d __, 2008 WL 681211 (Mich. App., March 11, 2008).