

Medication Noncompliance: Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner's Negligence Leads To Attack On Clinic Worker.

The patient was discharged from the state hospital into the care of a psychiatric registered nurse advanced practitioner at an outpatient community mental health clinic for management of her anti-psychotic medication.

The patient had been sent to the state hospital for involuntary treatment after she doused an H&R Block tax preparer with gasoline and attempted to light him on fire, then attacked a police officer.

The nurse practitioner lowered her medication dosage after the patient complained it made her feel drowsy in the morning.

Then the patient went off her medication entirely and accosted, slashed and stabbed an employee at another community clinic where she was scheduled for a dental appointment, apparently thinking she was a woman who was stalking her.

The victim's lawsuit filed in the Superior Court, King County, Washington resulted in a \$5.5 million settlement from the state agency which employed the nurse practitioner.

Nurse Practitioner Failed to Investigate Her Patient's History of Violence

The nurse practitioner never looked into the reason her patient was committed to the state hospital in the first place.

If the nurse practitioner had looked into her patient's background, it was alleged, she would have realized that medication non-compliance posed a serious risk of violence to other persons.

Concern over her patient's potential for violence should have led, in turn, to use of depot medication injection to insure medication compliance and to close watch for the onset of psychotic symptoms pointing toward re-institutionalization on grounds of danger to others. **Dowe v. Community Psychiatric**, 2009 WL 5715461 (Sup. Ct. King Co., Washington, September 21, 2009).