

Diabetes: No Insulin Given, Court Finds Negligence.

The elderly diabetic Alzheimer's patient was completely dependent upon the nursing home's nursing staff to monitor his blood sugar and to administer appropriate doses of insulin per the sliding scale established by his physician.

As his blood-sugar was rising steadily to 540 over a seven-day period a nurse was leaving phone messages for the physician, but no insulin was given. The patient became unresponsive, was taken to the hospital in a coma and died nine days later.

The patient's family does not have to have expert testimony if the patient's caregivers themselves admit their own conduct fell below the standard of care.

The director of nursing testified not giving insulin per the physician's standing orders is below the nursing standard of care.

MISSOURI COURT OF APPEALS
November 21, 2006

The Missouri Court of Appeals approved a jury's verdict for the family against the nursing home and the nurse.

According to the court, when a physician has implemented a sliding scale for a patient's insulin, the nurse should go ahead and administer the appropriate insulin dosage and the nurse should not delay while attempting to contact the physician to report the patient's recent blood sugar readings and obtain instructions from the physician what to do. Rush v. Senior Citizen's Nursing Home District of Ray County, __ S.W. 3d __, 2006 WL 3361856 (Mo. App., November 21, 2006).