

## Post-Partum Care: Patient's Death Tied, In Part, To Nursing Negligence.

The \$7.6 million settlement of a civil lawsuit filed in the Superior Court, Los Angeles County, California was reported on condition that the names of the patient, hospital, physicians, nurses, etc., remain confidential.

The lawsuit raised complex medical issues involved in the vaginal delivery of triplets and the mother's post-partum care at a tertiary care facility specially chosen as appropriate for this complicated procedure.

### **Nurses Held Up Physician's Order For Blood Lab Work**

On the night following delivery the mother, on the post-partum floor and not in the ICU, had a blood pressure of 70/53 and clammy skin.

Two junior resident physicians came to her room, started a saline IV to raise her blood pressure and ordered a "stat" CBC. The residents apparently expected the blood work to be done right away and to be advised of the results right away. Then they were going to confer with a senior obstetrical resident about what to do, but none of that ever happened.

The patient's husband asked the nurses if it was OK to delay the blood tests until morning. His wife was completely exhausted from her ordeal earlier that day delivering three babies. The nurses agreed.

The nurses never followed through to see that the lab sent someone to draw the blood.

At 6:00 a.m. on morning rounds the residents discovered the patient in cardio-pulmonary arrest. The patient had been bleeding into her abdominal cavity. Her hemoglobin was 4 and her hematocrit was 12%, midrange normals being 14 and 42%.

She now has severe brain damage and is semi-comatose and institutionalized. **Confidential v. Confidential, 2007 WL 4896737 (Sup. Ct. Los Angeles Co., California, November 21, 2007).**