

# Sexual Assault: Facility Managers Knew Male Nurse Had Potential For Abuse, Violence.

A twenty-nine year-old female developmentally disabled patient, a frequent admittee at the state hospital, was raped by a male nurse.

The patient's lawsuit filed in the Superior Court, Spokane County, Washington was settled by the State for \$2,500,000.

## **Perpetrator's Prior Work Record**

### **Potential for Harm**

If the case had gone to trial the evidence would have pointed to the male nurse's prior seven-year work record, including several instances of patient abuse, violations of the facility's internal policies and the state administrative code and multiple acts of insubordination.

The nurse was considered by his supervisors to be psychologically unstable and dangerous.

The nurse manager of the adult psychiatric unit had reportedly informed her higher-ups that there were grave concerns about the nurse's ability to provide safe and effective care to patients and his high potential for violence toward others.

## **Patient's Medical History**

### **Potential for Abuse**

The patient in question had been admitted to the psychiatric facility approximately eighteen times. This time her diagnoses included potential for harm to self, depression and ineffective individual coping related to alleged sexual assault and substance abuse.

The rationale for bringing up the patient's own issues in the lawsuit was not to blame the victim. The rationale was that it compounded the inappropriateness of the facility allowing this particular nurse unsupervised one-to-one access to this particular patient. **Jane Doe v. State Dept. of Social and Health Services, 2007 WL 4616717 (Sup. Ct. Spokane Co., Washington, July 2, 2007).**