

## Psych Triage: Nurse Ruled Not At Fault.

During a violent argument the patient's boyfriend tried to shoot her, but the gun misfired. Then she tried to stab herself, but the boyfriend took the knife away, called 911 and reported she had tried to commit suicide.

The police came and took her to an acute-care hospital. The triage nurse attempted to assess the urgency of her condition. She took vital signs and noted her allergies and medications. The patient persistently denied any suicidal intention or recent suicidal behavior.

The nurse phoned a physician who said to call in the licensed mental-health counselor on the hospital staff. The counselor arrived at 2:00 a.m., assessed her risk of self-harm as low and, after consulting with the physician, decided not to start the involuntary commitment process.

Two days after being released she shot herself. The US Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit agreed with the hospital's psych nursing expert the nurse complied fully with the nursing standard of care for this situation. **Kinchen v. Gateway Community Service Board, 2006 WL 3803014 (11th Cir., December 28, 2006).**