

No Seatbelt: Wheelchair Patient Injured In Van Accident.

A wheelchair-bound patient was being transported in the nursing home's van to a dental appointment when the nurse driving the van had to hit the brakes to avoid a collision with another vehicle.

According to the Supreme Court of Arkansas, the patient was not strapped into her wheelchair. The court record did not indicate whether the wheelchair itself was secured from moving inside the van.

The patient was thrown forward and hit her head and face on the seat in front of her and was taken back to the nursing home lying on the floor of the van.

The injuries from the accident started a downward spiral in her condition. As her mood, mobility and appetite decreased, she began to suffer complications like contractures, bedsores and urinary tract infections. Eventually she died from sepsis from a decubitus ulcer. The jury's award of damages against the nursing home and its corporate parent companies was almost \$2,000,000. Health Facilities Management Corp. v. Hughes, __ S.W. 3d __, 2006 WL 301084 (Ark., February 9, 2006).