

## Suicide: Hospital Ruled Not Liable.

The day before the thirty-nine year-old police officer hanged himself at home his wife and father brought him to the hospital's emergency room, concerned about his mental health.

The patient reportedly told the emergency room nurse he had given all his firearms to his father the day before.

The emergency room nurse relayed the patient's statement to the mental health professional on duty in the E.R. The mental health professional thought the patient was having an anxiety attack and recommended a full work-up. The E.R. nurse had the patient seen by the E.R. physician, then by a hospital social worker.

The consensus of all the professional staff who saw the patient was that he was suffering from anxiety, for which a Xanax prescription was written, but was not displaying grounds for admission to the hospital as a suicide risk.

The argument to the jury by the family's lawyer was that the patient's statement to the E.R. nurse about getting rid of his guns, in and of itself, obligated the hospital to offer the patient voluntary admission for mental health treatment.

The jury in the Superior Court, Morris County, New Jersey, ruled in favor of all the defendants, the nurse, the hospital, the physician and the social worker. **Estate of Cillo v. Morristown Mem. Hosp.**, 2009 WL 3863106 (Sup. Ct. Morris Co., New Jersey, September 23, 2009).