

Heart Attack After Heartburn Diagnosis Results in \$625,000 Recovery – Medical Malpractice – Presented With Chest Pain – 34-Year-Old Female – Heartburn Diagnosed – Heart Attack – Dispute Over EKG Readings – No Lost Wages – \$625,000 Settlement

by dmc-admin

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Type of action: Medical malpractice

Injuries alleged: Heart attack — permanent heart damage

Special damages: There were no lost wages as plaintiff was not working prior to the heart attack.

Name of case: Confidential

Court: Confidential

Case No.: Confidential

Tried before: n/a

Name of judge: Settled shortly before mediation

Verdict/settlement: Settlement

Amount: \$625,000

Date obtained: November 2005

Demand: n/a

Offer: n/a

Experts: n/a

Insurer: n/a

Plaintiff's attorney: Bailey Melvin, Melvin Law Firm, Greenville

Person Submitting: Bailey Melvin

Description: Plaintiff was a 34-year-old female who went to the emergency room with chest pain. An EKG was done which was read as normal. She was diagnosed with heartburn and was given a GI cocktail and her chest pain cleared up. She was sent home and told to follow up with her family doctor if she had further problems.

Her chest pain returned later that same day and she returned to the ER where she was seen by the same doctor. She was again diagnosed with heartburn and given a GI cocktail. Her chest pain cleared up and she was sent home.

The next day she had a heart attack. Plaintiff suffered significant permanent heart damage

which has affected her ability to do daily activities and has reduced her life expectancy. Plaintiff's experts testified that the ER doctor misinterpreted the EKG which they felt showed the plaintiff was getting ready to have a heart attack. They testified plaintiff should have been admitted to the hospital on her first visit and been evaluated by a cardiologist. They said that if this had been done most, if not all, of the heart damage could have been avoided. The defendant argued that the EKG had to be interpreted in light of her age and clinical signs. They argued that it is very unusual for young women to have heart attacks and that the fact her chest pain resolved twice when she was given a GI cocktail showed the doctors treatment was reasonable. There was also a significant issue as to whether earlier treatment would necessarily avoided the heart damage.

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