

1210 - Medical Malpractice - The plaintiff linked a hand injury to an IV infiltration secondary to a nephrectomy procedure at UMMC – this MTCA case was tried as a bench trial and the plaintiff prevailed and took damages of \$500,000

Thomas v. University of Mississippi Medical Center, 21-462

Plaintiff: Raymond P. Gee, Jr. and Joe N. Tatum, *Tatum & Wade*, Jackson

Defense: Joseph G. Baladi and Corey D. Hinshaw, *Watkins & Eager*, Jackson

Verdict: \$500,000 for plaintiff (Bench verdict)

Court: **Hinds**

Judge: Adrienne Wooten

Date: 9-3-24 (Decision)

Case Tried 4-18-24

Isadore Thomas, then age 52, was suffering from end-stage renal disease on 11-17-20. He'd had a kidney transplant some six years earlier. His body was now rejecting it. On this day Thomas was at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) for a nephrectomy. In preparation for that surgery, a nurse attempted to place an IV line in his hand. She failed and a second nurse finally got the line placed.

Thomas was hospitalized the next three days at UMMC. He continued to complain of pain and redness in his hand at the site of the IV. There was proof a nurse documented an infiltration of Thomas' hand on 11-18 and she then switched the IV to his forearm.

Following Thomas' dismissal from UMMC, he followed with his primary care physician, Dr. Morgan Miller at Merit Health Byram. He mentioned pain in his hand. Miller noted this and also diagnosed Thomas with pneumonia. Miller

referred Thomas back to UMMC.

Thomas returned to UMMC on 11-23-20 but because of high patient volume, he was not admitted until the next day. He remained in the hospital from 11-24 to 12-1. His hand at the site of the original IV location continued to bother him.

Following his discharge on 12-1-20, Thomas had ongoing pain. He was finally back to Merit Health Byram on 12-20-20. At this time it was noted he had necrosis in his hand at the site of the IV placement. He subsequently underwent a debridement, tissue transfer and skin graft. Why? He had developed a calciphylaxis in his left hand. This is a rare condition where an arterial calcification develops in the hand. It is sometimes linked to an IV infiltration. Thomas continues to have limited use of his left hand, scarring and pain.

Thomas filed this MTCA lawsuit against UMMC and alleged malpractice by hospital nurses in failing to place, manage and assess the IV in his hand. They were also blamed for failing to advise UMMC physicians when the condition changed as well as failing to make wound care evaluations. These purported errors led to an IV infiltration which in turn caused the calciphylaxis from the irritants from the IV. The plaintiff's liability expert was Dr. Sonny Bal, Orthopedics, Columbia, MO.

UMMC defended on several fronts. The first was to note that an infiltration is always a risk of an IV. The defense experts, LaDonna Northington, Professor of Nursing, Jackson and Dr. David Carroll, Surgery, Jackson, opined the nursing care met the standard of care.

UMMC also contested causation. It described that calciphylaxis has no

cure nor can it be predicted or prevented. The heart of this defense was that Thomas' calciphylaxis was not related to an infiltration event and in fact, the cause (infiltration or otherwise) is unknown.

This case was tried for four days before Judge Wooten in April. She had her decision a little more than five months later on 9-3-24. The court found that the defendant "gravely" deviated from the standard of care in mishandling the IV placement and management. The court awarded Thomas economic damages of \$108,164 and \$391,835 more in non-economic damages. Including "cents" the bench verdict was exactly \$500,000 which is also the statutory cap. This was all memorialized in the court's final judgment.

Case Documents:

[Pretrial Order](#)

[Plaintiff Expert Disclosure](#)

[Plaintiff Proposed Findings of Fact](#)

[Defense Proposed Findings of Fact](#)

[Final Judgment](#)