

URGENT

Michigan City woman awarded \$14.4 million in federal medical malpractice suit

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John J. Watkins, The Times

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Kathryn Parker, 52, of Michigan City, has been awarded \$14.4 million after a federal judge ruled in her favor Wednesday in a lawsuit against two Illinois doctors and a hospital for brain damage she suffered during gastric bypass surgery. She is joined by attorney Kenneth J. Allen during a press conference Thursday.

MERRILLVILLE | A Michigan City woman is set to receive more than \$14 million after a federal jury ruled that two Illinois doctors botched her bariatric surgery and left her with brain damage.

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Kathryn Parker, 52, was awarded \$9.4 million in a Chicago federal courtroom Wednesday night after the jury found Drs. Jeffrey Rosen and Allen Mikhail guilty of negligence in the 2010 procedure that caused her injuries. The hospital where the surgery took place, Advocate Good Samaritan in Downers Grove, Ill., settled with Parker before the trial for \$5 million.

"She's going to need health care around the clock for the rest of her life," her lawyer, Kenneth J. Allen, said during a press conference Thursday at his Merrillville law office. "Those needs will be taken care of now."

The surgeons' attorney, William C. Anderson III, said his clients are currently considering their options.

Parker met the doctors through their then-office in Merrillville, where she went to seek treatment for obesity. Rosen and Mikhail, of Downers Grove-based LifeWeigh Bariatrics, performed her gastric bypass surgery at Advocate Good Samaritan in February 2010. Allen said that at the time of the surgery, Parker had a condition she was taking a blood thinner for, but the doctors gave her the wrong anti-coagulation medication, causing her extensive internal bleeding and loss of blood flow to the brain.

"I can't walk anymore," Parker said Thursday, surrounded by her three sisters, who now live with her and take care of her full time. "I can't do anything I used to do."

Parker, who now uses a wheelchair and has cognitive losses, previously home-schooled her four children, ages 7 to 20. She claimed during the press conference that her husband of more than 20 years left her for one of the nurse's aides assigned to her care.

Allen said this case should serve as a warning to patients that they should do their due diligence before selecting a surgeon, by researching online court dockets and state medical licensing board websites for any previous complaints.

He also noted that if this case had been tried in Indiana, which caps awards in medical malpractice suits, her damages would have been limited to \$1.25 million, an amount that wouldn't have even covered the cost of her care to this point.



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