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\$24 million payout reached in accident

Crash resulted in Porter County woman becoming a paraplegic

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VALPARAISO | A young woman who was rendered a paraplegic when the car she was riding in was struck by a semitrailer five years ago will receive a \$24 million settlement from the semi's owner and its insurance carrier.

Lisa Keppen, of Porter County, will receive payments for the remainder of her life, according to the settlement her attorney, Kenneth J. Allen, negotiated for her.

Allen said the money will ensure Keppen's health care will be taken care of for life.

"She would give that money back in a heartbeat if she could erase the tragedy," Allen said.

Keppen, 20, suffered a spinal injury on June 19, 2002 when a USF Holland semitrailer eastbound on U.S. 12 turned in front of the car Keppen was riding in. The crash occurred at U.S. 12 and Kansas Avenue in the Pine Township section of Porter County.

The crash caused Keppen to lose her ability to walk and control her bowel and bladder functions, according to court documents. The documents state she suffers chronic pain and depression, and will require assistance from others for the rest of her life -- an estimated 61 more years. Her medical care will cost an estimated \$5.7 million.

"Apart from her economic damages, Lisa has suffered enormous human loss as a result of her injury including: the permanent loss of a normal life, constant and intractable physical pain, emotional suffering and, of course, disfigurement," Allen states in court documents.

Allen alleged USF failed to properly train, test and supervise its drivers. USF didn't admit negligence, but offered a settlement, according to court documents.



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