

LEGAL EAGLE EYE NEWSLETTER
For the Nursing Profession
P.O. BOX 4592
PIONEER SQUARE STATION
SEATTLE WA 98104-0592

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit No. 2359

Hip Dislocation After Joint Replacement: Court Blames Nurses For Improper Transfer Technique.

The patient had joint replacement surgery following a hip fracture. Five years later she fractured her proximal femur near the prosthesis. It healed but left her prone to repeated spontaneous hip re-dislocations.

Four years later the hip replacement was repeated. During this joint replacement surgery the femur was fractured. After the surgery her physicians fitted the patient with a brace to prevent posterior dislocation of the hip. The patient was admitted to the rehabilitation floor of the hospital for physical therapy.

Her physical therapist removed her brace during physical therapy, then returned the patient to her room on the rehab floor and left her in her chair without replacing her brace.

Physical therapy personnel returned the patient to her room on the rehab floor without replacing her brace after physical therapy. She fell asleep in her chair.

Two nurses put the patient to bed without waking her and without first replacing her brace. The patient's hip was re-dislocated when the nurses lifted her.

The nurses injured the patient through their negligence in this transfer.

SUPREME COURT OF COLORADO, 1999.

While she was still asleep in her chair, without waking her, and without replacing the brace, two nurses lifted the patient into bed. Her hip dislocated during this transfer.

The patient sued the hospital for negligence. The Supreme Court of Colorado put the blame on the nurses. The court ruled the nurses were negligent, even though they were not responsible for the brace not having been replaced by the physical therapist.

Two registered nurses were retained as expert witnesses for the patient on appropriate standards of nursing practice. Their affidavits pointed to incorrect lifting technique by the nurses putting the patient in bed. **Shelton v. Penrose/St. Francis Healthcare System, 984 P. 2d 623 (Colo., 1999).**