

Patient Abuse: Psych Patient's Hair Cut, Face Shaved While Physically Restrained.

The Veterans Hospital had a barber shop where patients who could afford the nominal cost could get a haircut or a shave. The patient in question, a paranoid schizophrenic undergoing inpatient psychiatric treatment, had the money but just did not like getting haircuts or shaving.

A psychiatric registered nurse with seventeen years experience in the VA psych unit decided to give him a haircut and shave his face. When he tried to roll himself away in his wheelchair the nurse had one aide hold the wheels and another aide hold his wrists as she gave him a haircut and tried to shave him.

The patient testified later he resisted verbally but not physically because he did not want to injure one of the two aides who was pregnant.

Patient abuse includes mental, physical, sexual and verbal abuse, such as any action or behavior that conflicts with patients' rights, willful violation of a patient's privacy or willful physical injury.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FEDERAL CIRCUIT
March 17, 2006

The US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled the RN's conduct was patient abuse and serious enough to justify the maximum penalty of termination from her position at the hospital notwithstanding her lengthy seniority. **Taylor v. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, 2006 WL 678926 (Fed. Cir., March 17, 2006).**