

## Low Hemoglobin: Nurses Faulted For Failing To Notify Physician Before Discharge.

The patient had an emergency appendectomy.

Still in the hospital a few days after surgery the patient was having abdominal discomfort, was running a fever and had blood in her stool. The surgeon ordered an abdominal CT scan and gave orders for the nurses to report to him if the patient's hemoglobin level dropped below 10.

The patient was discharged, but was back in the hospital, a different hospital, the same afternoon the day she was discharged. At that hospital her hemoglobin was found to be 9.6.

The second hospital went ahead with a colonoscopy and a laparoscopy. The surgeons found and corrected the damage from the appendectomy, that is, portions of the cecum and ileocolic vessels incorporated into the fascial closure of the incision, causing necrosis of intestinal tissue.

The chart from the first hospital revealed that the surgeon's order to be notified if the hemoglobin dropped below 10 had been transcribed by the nurses. The 8.9 hemoglobin level was in there as well.

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***The surgeon testified he would not have discharged the patient if the nurses had informed him that the patient's hemoglobin was only 8.9 the day he discharged her, as he had asked them.***

COURT OF APPEALS OF ARIZONA  
December 16, 2010

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The Court of Appeals of Arizona ruled the patient had grounds for a lawsuit against the first hospital for the nurses' negligence in not seeing that the indicated lab value was brought to the surgeon's attention. The lawsuit also implicated the surgeon for his own carelessness. **Borowsky v. Scottsdale Healthcare Corp.**, 2010 WL 5238574 (Ariz. App., December 16, 2010).