

## Rehab Patient: Nurses Did Not Look At Lab Work, Missed MI.

The sixty-six year-old patient was admitted to the nursing home's special wing reserved for short-term rehab patients. He had had pulmonary emboli while hospitalized for his recent back injury and was on chemo for lung cancer.

When his wife came to pick him up late in the afternoon of the last day of his planned one-week admission she told the nurses he was clammy and perspiring, short of breath and incoherent.

The LPN on duty told her it was a just a urinary tract infection and it was still all right for him to go home.

The wife thought differently. She called paramedics. They transported him to the hospital. It was not possible to save him. He died six hours later from an MI.

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***Blood was drawn at 1:00 p.m. and the nurses got the lab results back at 3:45 p.m. His enzymes were critically elevated, which indicated that he had had a heart attack. There was no indication of infectious processes consistent with a urinary tract infection.***

***The patient was discharged at 5:05 p.m.***

DISTRICT COURT  
ADAMS COUNTY, COLORADO  
January 27, 2010

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The jury in the District Court, Adams County, Colorado awarded the widow \$450,000.

The widow's lawsuit faulted the nursing home's parent corporation for hiring staff LPN's instead of RN's for the rehab unit. Registered nurses, it was alleged, would be more appropriate to manage the care of this man, a more medically complex patient than those usually seen in nursing homes. ***Reigel v. SavaSeniorCare, 2010 WL 1040040 (Dist. Ct. Adams Co., Colorado, January 27, 2010).***