

## Ruptured Spleen: Nurse Faulted For Failing To Report To Physician.

The patient was struck in the abdomen by a heavy object while working on a construction site.

It took almost two weeks for him to go to an emergency room. He was admitted with a diagnosis of a ruptured spleen.

A general surgeon wrote an order for hemoglobin and hematocrit levels to be obtained every six hours and for the surgery department to be contacted if the hemoglobin fell below 9.

### **Nurse to Report Abnormal Lab Values**

The patient's nurse reportedly failed to contact the surgeon to report that the second hemoglobin so obtained was below 9.

The nurse also continued to administer heparin even though a low hemoglobin in a patient diagnosed with a ruptured spleen should have been seen as an indication of internal bleeding which required prompt correction by the surgical department.

The patient had a myocardial infarction the next morning, then died right after another infarction a few days later.

A jury in the Circuit Court, Wayne County, Michigan awarded the widow \$875,000 of which 80% was allocated to the hospital for payment. **Overbay v. Botsford General Hosp., 2009 WL 2414354 (Cir. Ct. Wayne Co., Michigan, April 3, 2009).**