

Labor & Delivery: Nurse Faulted For Mishandling Of Shoulder Dystocia.

The baby's delivery was performed in the hospital by an obstetrician with the assistance of a registered nurse.

The child now has Erb's palsy as a result of complications from her delivery during which shoulder dystocia was encountered and allegedly mishandled by the obstetrician and nurse.

A lawsuit was filed on the child's behalf against the obstetrician and the nurse. The nurse's lawyers asked for dismissal of the nurse from the case on the grounds that the parents' lawyers had not come up with a valid opinion from an expert to support their allegations of nursing negligence.

When shoulder dystocia is encountered during delivery the labor and delivery nurse has a duty to advocate for the patient.

The nurse must immediately call for assistance from additional qualified medical staff including a neonatologist and an anesthesiologist and additional nurses, if available.

APPEALS COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
February 8, 2011

The Appeals Court of Massachusetts ruled that the opinion from the family's expert pointed to nursing negligence.

Shoulder dystocia can require the McRoberts Maneuver to free the impinged shoulder, and that requires the involvement of more people, all of whom have to be knowledgeable and qualified, optimally three more than the two, the ob/gyn and the nurse who were there for this delivery.

The nurse also has to document that shoulder dystocia was encountered and what was done about it. That documentation was absent in this case. Donaldson v. Payne, 2011 WL 383036 (Mass. App., February 8, 2011).