

Wound Care: Nurse Drops Dressing, Jury Awards Damages.

The patient was transferred from the hospital to a rehab facility several days after hip replacement surgery.

His care plan called for his surgical wound to be cleansed and the dressing changed daily by the rehab nurses.

One week after surgery a nurse was changing the dressing on his surgical wound. The nurse reportedly dropped the dressing on the floor, then picked it up and reapplied it to his wound.

The nurse removed the dressing from the patient's surgical wound, dropped it on the floor, picked it up and reapplied it.

The patient complained to another nurse the next morning and she changed the dressing.

DISTRICT COURT
SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
October 13, 2009

The patient was discharged home the next day. Eight days later, however, he had to be readmitted to the hospital where he had had his surgery.

An *E. coli* infection was diagnosed in the wound. At the hospital the wound was irrigated and debrided. The hip prosthesis had to be removed and re-implanted some months later.

The patient's lawsuit filed in the District Court, Sedgwick County, Kansas alleged the nurse's care fell below the standard of care. The lawsuit also alleged that the rehab facility itself was negligent for failing to train its nurses in wound care and infection control standards and for failing to select and evaluate its nurses so that a competent nurse would be assigned to his care. The jury awarded the patient \$437,293 from the rehab facility. **Kerns v. HCA Wesley Rehab, 2009 WL 6923576 (Dist. Ct. Sedgwick Co., Kansas, October 13, 2009).**