

Jury Fines Nursing Home Chain \$619 Million for Safety Violations

By Catherine Bertram - July 10, 2010

This week, The Eureka Times-Standard reported, that a jury in California returned a verdict against Skilled Healthcare, a nursing home chain in Humboldt County Superior Court on Tuesday, "opting to impose the maximum amount of damages totaling nearly \$619 million for health code violations." Along with "the statutory damages, the jury awarded an additional \$58 million for a violation of the California Consumer Legal Remedies Act, bringing the total damages to nearly \$677 million."

Skilled Healthcare runs approximately 76 nursing home facilities and another 21 assisted living facilities in California and 6 other southwestern states. The company has over 10,000 beds and 14,000 employees.

The trial involved patient incidents from 2003 through 2009 and an estimated 32,000 patients. The case has been going on for over 7 months. Next week the jury will be deciding the issue of punitive damages.

About the author:

Catherine Bertram is board certified in civil trials and was recently nominated as a 2010 Super Lawyer for Washington, D.C. Ms. Bertram has 20 years of trial experience and is unique in that she was formerly the Director of Risk Management for Georgetown University Hospital. She is a partner with the firm and devotes her practice to the representation of patients and families of loved ones who have been injured or lost due to medical errors. Ms. Bertram lectures regularly to lawyers and health care providers, nationally and locally, regarding patient safety, medical negligence and other related issues. She has also recently published a chapter in a medical textbook. She can be reached by email at cbertram@reganfirm.com or by phone 202-822-1875 in her office in Washington, D.C.