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Woman sues hospital for resuscitating her

By Edmundo Carrillo / Journal Staff Writer

Thursday, November 15th, 2018 at 11:40pm

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A new lawsuit filed on behalf of a local woman alleges that Santa Fe's Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical was negligent twice while she was in the hospital in 2016.

The suit filed on behalf of Jamie Sams, a writer known for books on spirituality, says the hospital and a doctor who was treating her are to blame for Sams going into cardiac arrest.

And the negligence was compounded when hospital personnel resuscitated her, the lawsuit suit states.

Reviving Sams violated her "do no resuscitate" directive, the lawsuit says.

Now Sams must live the rest of her life with pain and substantial medical bills, according to the suit filed in state District Court.

"As a result of being revived, Plaintiff continues to experience severe pain, disability and limitations and further, will incur extensive expenses throughout the remainder of her life," the lawsuit against Christus and emergency room doctor Jamie Gagan states.

Sams is also suing because she was given the painkiller Dilaudid, which the lawsuit says she is allergic to.

Sams suffers from Dercum's, a rare, painful disease that produces tumors all over the body.

"This condition is extremely debilitating and painful and, moreover, requires frequent hospitalization and medication at great expense," the lawsuit says.

Sams went to the Christus St. Vincent emergency room on Feb. 5, 2016, for pain control and was prescribed Dilaudid through an IV by Gagan, "despite the fact that she had advised emergency room staff that she was allergic to this medication."

Sams had an allergic reaction to the Dilaudid and went into cardiac arrest.

She was revived by emergency room staff, even though she signed a "Double DNR (do not resuscitate)" form.

"Despite the fact that Plaintiff Sams had signed a double DNR indicating that she did not wish to be resuscitated or intubated, the emergency room staff provided such services," the suit says.

"Plaintiff Sams was resuscitated, something she adamantly did not want."

"The DNR met all statutory requirements, and was valid and binding upon Plaintiff's health care providers, including Defendants Gagan and Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center," the suit also says.

"Defendants had notice of the existence that Plaintiff had signed the DNR. Plaintiff Sams was wearing a purple bracelet issued by the hospital and labeled 'DNR.' "

Christus spokesman Arturo Delgado said Gagan works for HealthFront, which does emergency services work for the hospital. He said he could not comment on the lawsuit.

Sams is a Native American author who, among other titles on spirituality, co-wrote “Medicine Cards: The Discovery of Power Through the Ways of Animals.”

When the Catholic Christus Health System of Texas merged with what had been St. Vincent hospital in 2008, some concerns were expressed publicly about whether Catholic religious doctrine would impact patients’ end-of-life directives.

But there has been no public controversy at the Santa Fe hospital over the issue in the decade since and the Sams lawsuit makes no claim that any policy or religious doctrine had an impact on how Sams was treated.

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