$1.2 Million Settlement

The husband of a 49-year-old woman who died following a dilation and curettage procedure sued for medical malpractice.

Cynthia Holmes underwent the D&C at a St. Louis hospital on Jan. 12, 2000 for a history of bleeding. Her OB-GYN, Dr. Chalermquian Chadchantana, started the procedure using a local anesthetic but at a certain point decided to continue under general anesthesia.

Extensive bleeding occurred during the D&C, which led to a lack of perfusion — blood supply — to the brain. Holmes had to be resuscitated. Due to irreversible brain damage, she died on Feb. 22.

Holmes had no children, and her parents were deceased. Her husband of 13 years, John Holmes, claimed in his lawsuit against Dr. Chadchantana, the anesthesia personnel and the hospital that the risk of bleeding should have been anticipated and prepared for before the procedure.

He noted that Cynthia had a history of diabetes and hypertension, making her particularly susceptible to blood loss. In addition he claimed that her hemoglobin and hematocrit levels, taken two days before the D&C, were both low and should have alerted medical personnel to the potential significance of bleeding should it occur during surgery.

The defendants denied negligence, arguing that adequate precautions were taken and that bleeding is an event that can occur absent negligence and lead to serious complications such as death.

John Holmes settled with Dr. Chadchantana and the anesthesia personnel for $1.2 million. He reached a confidential settlement with the hospital.