

News **Litigation**

Nonmetro Jury Delivers \$4.35M Verdict in Wrongful Death Lawsuit Against Gastroenterologist

A Reading, Pennsylvania jury handed up the verdict in a case over a failure to accurately diagnose and treat a woman's bleeding ulcer that led to her death. Kline & Specter attorneys attributed their success to their use of medical expert testimony. A majority of the award was for noneconomic damages.

September 23, 2026 at 03:31 PM By **Cameryn Oakes**



Jury Box. Photo: Ryland West/Law.com

A Reading, Pennsylvania, jury awarded \$4.35M to the surviving children of a woman who died after a gastroenterologist failed to accurately diagnose and treat her bleeding ulcer that resulted in health complications and ultimately her death.

The verdict, delivered on Sept. 18 after two hours of deliberation, was preceded by a five-day trial. Jurors attributed 25% of the negligence to Dr. Robert Cooper and 75% to the St. Joseph Regional Network, according to verdict sheets.

The case was heard in Berks County Court of Common Pleas and presided over by Judge Madelyn S. Fudeman.

Kelly Lynn Jones' estate was represented by David Inscho and Mark Fuchs, both of Kline & Specter. The defense was represented by Chilton G. Goebel of Saxton & Stump. Efforts to reach the defense for comment were unavailing.

Both Inscho and Fuchs said that medical field expert evidence laid out the convincing argument to jurors that Jones' case was one that should have been clear to a specialist and warranted further investigation to provide the medical care she needed. Evidence they presented illustrated how the standard of care was deviated from in Jones' case.

Medical experts testified that Cooper failed to deliver the standard of care by not obtaining pertinent medical history, not accurately recognizing her symptoms and prematurely signing off on her care. Statements made express that an endoscopy performed at the onset of her care would have identified the ulcer that could have been treated.

Expert testimony was provided by board certified gastroenterologist Dr. Aamir Ali and hematologist Dr. Jason Freed.

Inscho stressed the "ease" in which this case could have been handled by the gastroenterologist, of which he said the jurors had recognized, as the case involved a "very preventable injury."

Fuchs said that the jury agreed with their argument that more is required from medical providers than what was given to Jones.

Inscho added that there was value in achieving this verdict in a nonmetropolitan county, of which historically are not as likely to deliver verdicts in favor of plaintiffs in medical malpractice cases nor award substantial damages.

Yet in this case, the jury not only delivered both elements, but a majority of the award was noneconomic damages.

Jones' two adult children were awarded \$4 million in wrongful death damages and \$325,000 in survival act damages.

"It indicates how the jury recognized just how special her relationship was with her children," Inscho said.

While the case resulted in a \$4.35 million verdict, the only settlement offered by the defense prior to the decision was a total of \$150,000. This had been denied by the plaintiffs.

According to pretrial memos, Jones, who was 52, had sought treatment at an urgent care for severe abdominal pain in October 2021, and was transferred to the emergency room at St. Joseph's Medical Center. She was referred to gastroenterologist Cooper for potential internal bleeding. Cooper dismissed a gastrointestinal bleed as the source of her symptoms and signed off on her care after the singular consultation. Specialists who saw Jones afterward stressed a need for further gastroenterology investigation, suggesting a potential ulcer and need for an endoscopy, which was not provided.

A week after being discharged from the hospital, Jones was found unresponsive in her living room by her son. She was found to have suffered hemorrhagic shock due to a bleeding ulcer. Jones had sustained an anoxic injury and, after two months of life sustaining care, she died.

Clarification: This story has been updated to reflect the defense's counsel at the time of the verdict.

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