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Sacramento jury tells UC Davis to pay \$7.6 million to paraplegic woman

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Published Tuesday, Nov. 01, 2011

A Sacramento Superior Court jury awarded \$7.6 million to an Elk Grove woman on a finding that UC Davis Medical Center personnel misread an MRI exam and that ensuing complications left her paraplegic.

Friday's finding came on on behalf of plaintiff D'Knawn Hairston, who was 14 when her mother took her to the hospital in December 2003.

"The jury did a great job of working through the evidence and coming up with a result that will enable this very deserving young woman to move forward independently," plaintiff's lawyer Brooks Cutter said Monday.

Cutter said the verdict sends "an important message on the standpoint of community health."

Hairston was initially taken taken to the hospital with symptoms of numbness in her legs, Cutter said. He said that treating physicians found her MRI to be normal.

In February 2008, Hairston felt the same symptoms and was taken to Methodist Hospital, where doctors found an arteriovenous malformation on her thoracic spine, according to Cutter. Despite surgery, she suffered a permanently damaged spine and was left with no movement below her chest, Cutter said.

University of California spokeswoman Leslie Sepuka said in a statement that an internal review of the case showed "the medical care provided to Ms. Hairston was appropriate."

Sepuka cited the pending nature of the litigation in declining in the statement to comment further.

"This is a regrettable and unfortunate case for everyone involved," the statement said.

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