

11th November 2010

Lisa Richards-Everton Civil Claim Media Briefing Notes

Background

The civil claim for Lisa Richards-Everton against The Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust will take place on Thursday 11th November, 2010 at the Birmingham Civil Justice Centre, following the death of husband, Paul Richards, who died as a result of receiving a fatal overdose of the drug Amphotericin at Heartlands Birmingham Hospital in July 2007.

Lisa Richards-Everton and their three children have understandably all been greatly affected by the premature loss of a loving husband and father.

Paul Richards, 35 from Sutton Coldfield had been diagnosed with non Hodgkins' lymphoma in April 2007 and had been receiving chemotherapy at the Birmingham Heartlands Hospital. On 10th July 2007, Mr Richards had been suffering from the side effects of the chemotherapy. On 20th July 2007, he was prescribed an anti-fungal drug, Amphotericin. This drug was administered at five times the appropriate dose causing irreparable damage resulting in the death of Paul Richards.

On the evening the drug was administered, Mr Richard's wife, Lisa Richards-Everton, had been called to the hospital having been told that his condition had deteriorated. Lisa was accompanied by the couple's eldest child who was 15 at the time. On arrival at the hospital, Lisa was visibly shocked by the changes in her husband. In the hours that followed, Lisa was to witness horrifying and shocking events that have left her traumatised beyond the normal grief reaction. Her son has also been severely affected by the events he witnessed and the emotional state his mother was in.

At the inquest into the death of Paul Richards which was held on 2nd February 2009, the Heart of England NHS Trust was found guilty of Accidental Death to which neglect contributed. They admitted a breach of duty of care owed to Paul Richards in administering the fatal overdose of Amphotericin.

The civil hearing on 11th November is to settle the amount of compensation for Lisa Richards-Everton and the couple's three children.

Lisa Richards-Everton continues her campaign for tighter restrictions on the administration of drugs in the NHS and works closely with campaign groups and Action Against Medical Accidents (AvMA).

Key Issues

1. The Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust failed to take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those in its care by failing to ensure that there was a safety system in place to ensure that Amphotericin was prescribed and administered properly
2. A failure by medical staff to seek alternative advice/clarification on the drug type and usage
3. Lack of training which led to a failure to access the correct information from the Electronic British National Formulary which is the national drug dosage manual

4. Failure of prescription/observation charts to provide all the relevant information
5. The failure of the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust to provide protocols/statements for the practice of the administration and control of drugs

Quotes/Comment

Tony Hall, Partner, Anthony Collins Solicitors:

"We are pleased to resolve this claim on behalf of Lisa Richards-Everton and her family, but stress that no amount of compensation would make up for their premature loss.

Lisa Richards-Everton:

"No amount of compensation will make up for the loss of Paul.

"There seems to be no concern for patient safety Paul's death could have been so easily avoided. I am appalled that three years on there are still poor systems in place, which do not safeguard patients. Amphotericin is now only available through pharmacy at Heart of England Trust, but it is my understanding that it is still readily available on wards in hospitals throughout the UK.

"I will continue to work with Action Against Medical Accidents (AvMA) to ensure safer systems are put in place to safeguard patients. Patient safety should be priority, but sadly I know this is not the case."

Amphotericin

Amphotericin – a drug to fight fungal infections – is sold under different brand names and comes with different dosages. Two brands were confused and prescribed to Paul at five times the recommended dose.

The Heart of England NHS Foundation

The Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust includes Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Solihull Hospital, Good Hope Hospital and the Birmingham Chest Clinic.

Further Information

It is proposed that a press conference will be held at the conclusion of the hearing, details of which will be posted on www.anthonycollins.com.

Please note that all media enquiries should be directed to the Anthony Collins Press Office and not to the family, who have decided to reserve any comment that they wish to make for the press conference.

For further information please contact the Anthony Collins Press Office.

For general enquiries contact Simeon Ling on 07841 499693 or for media enquiries contact Tracy Evans on 07825 064497 or 01527 888992, email media@anthonycollins.com.

Anthony Collins Solicitors

Anthony Collins Solicitors is a full service law firm with a national reputation for advising individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organisations, local authorities, and public sector bodies throughout the UK. For nearly four decades, it has been successfully combining market-leading legal expertise with a commitment to excellence and long-term relationships underpinned by a strong ethical position.

Chambers UK, the leading guide to the legal industry, recently praised the firm across its broad range of practice areas, singling out an outstanding 20 leaders in their fields.

Its Clinical Negligence team has also been recognised by members of the legal profession. In particular, the Legal 500 and Chambers UK guides recommend Anthony Collins Solicitors as one of the leading law firms in clinical negligence in the West Midlands.

Tony Hall, Partner at Anthony Collins Solicitors, is the lead solicitor acting on behalf of the Lisa Richards-Everton. His profile is available at <http://www.anthonycollins.com/who-we-are/our-people.aspx>.