

## Suit claims woman died after anesthesiology

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Houston Chronicle

The family of a young woman who they claim died after an anesthesiology accident at Ben Taub Hospital has filed a lawsuit against the doctors and medical organizations they say are responsible.

Nathan Mae Richards, filed a lawsuit Wednesday against the Harris County Hospital District, Ben Taub General Hospital, Baylor College of Medicine and six physicians charging them with responsibility for the wrongful death of her 22-year-old daughter, Pamela Richards.

The physicians named are Drs. Rosalyn Baxter, Lewis Coveler, Albert T. Gros, Ed Morgan, Farideh Nasserian, Bernard Rosenfeld and Arturo Sobarzo.

The Chronicle described the incident leading to this lawsuit in a copyright article April 29, in which Baylor medical college President Dr. William Butler acknowledged that one death and two instances of brain damage at Ben Taub in 1983 may have been anesthesiology-related.

Mrs. Richards, the mother of three children, went to Ben Taub on July 20, 1983, with what was diagnosed as a tubal pregnancy.

A source who asked not to be identified told the Chronicle previously that an oxygen tube that should have been placed in Mrs. Richards' windpipe during surgery was inadvertently placed in her esophagus,

cutting off the flow of oxygen to her brain.

Mrs. Richards left the operating room in a coma and died July 27. Her death certificate lists cardiac arrest as the cause of death, but a space on the certificate provided to list contributing factors was left blank.

The lawsuit, filed in state district court, accuses the medical school of "negligence and gross negligence" for such things as failing to supervise the residents administering the anesthetic and failing to properly train those residents in the administration of anesthetics.

The lawsuit charges that Drs. Coveler, Nasserian and Sobarzo were trained by Baylor.

Attorney Richard Mithoff, representing the estate of Mrs. Richards, is currently representing another party claiming anesthesiology negligence at Ben Taub and says he has been contacted by others with similar concerns.

Though not spelled out in the lawsuit, the settlement Mithoff is seeking for his clients in the Richards case will be "well in excess of a million dollars," he says.

Richard Durbin, administrator for the Harris County Hospital District, acknowledged he is aware of the lawsuit and indicated it would be handled by the county attorney's office. He had no comment on the specifics of the suit.

Baylor College of Medicine Administrator Alfus Johnson said he had not yet been served with the lawsuit.