

## Errors at hospital leave man brain damaged

*Alarms sounded but a young man was left without oxygen for six minutes. Jury awards record medical-malpractice award.*

Aug. 23, 2000 – A jury today awarded a Pennsylvania-record \$49 million medical-malpractice damages to a man who suffered severe brain damage at a Philadelphia hospital. David Caruso, 23, went to Neumann Medical Center in 1997 with a treatable illness but a series of errors left him in a near-vegetative state, unable to speak or move on his own.

The injury occurred after an endotracheal tube used to help Caruso breath was inserted improperly. The tube dislodged and cut off his oxygen supply. Monitor alarms sounded but it took a nurse six minutes to respond, resulting in brain damage. Shanin Specter, attorney for the Caruso family, gave a novel closing speech at the trial. He told Caruso's story in the first-person, speaking as if Caruso was speaking for himself, telling the jury of his family and his fiancé, of his future plans, of dreams and aspirations that would never be.

The jury returned with the \$49 million verdict against the attending nurse and three doctors.