An Allegheny County jury awarded $7.8 million to a Westmoreland County couple whose son suffered permanent brain damage when delivery doctors failed to help the child start breathing for the first nine minutes of his life.

Parents Diana and Michael Briggs, of New Alexandria, won the verdict Tuesday in their medical malpractice case against Drs. Daniel Lapp and Feyisitan Adebajo, UPMC Shadyside Hospital and the East End Community Health Center.

The suit argued that the doctors should have given Ryan Briggs a common medication used to treat breathing and pulse irregularities immediately after he was born not breathing and with no pulse on May 29, 2000.

Shanin Specter, the Briggs' lawyer, declined comment on the award. Defense attorney Richard J. Federowicz could not be reached for comment.

According to the lawsuit, Ryan, 4, suffers from severe cerebral palsy, is blind, cannot speak, sit up or turn over on his own.

The suit said Diana Briggs had a normal pregnancy and that Ryan's birth condition was easily treatable through standard natal care practices.

The jury found the doctors and hospital were negligent in not providing the needed care.

The suit says care for the child costs more than $400,000 annually.

The jury award came after a three-week trial before Allegheny County Common Pleas Judge W. Terrence O'Brien.