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by Kia Gregory

PHA to pay \$9.68 million for brain damage

The Philadelphia Housing Authority will pay the family of a girl \$9.68 million to settle a lawsuit prompted by brain damage she sustained when mold in her public housing apartment triggered an asthma attack. Ebony Gage, now 16, was 12 when the episode occurred at the apartment in Frankford. Attorneys for the family claimed that PHA was aware of the condition, continued to pay the landlord full rent, and required the family to give 30 days' notice before it could vacate the apartment. It was during that time Gage had the asthma attack. Under a federal statute known as a "state-created danger," those three actions left Gage "more vulnerable to harm," thereby violating her civil rights, said one of Gage's attorneys. A PHA spokesperson could not be reached for comment. PHA paid the rent to the property management company, Artur Realty, which also agreed to pay \$2 million to settle the suit.

"Ebony can't walk," said lead attorney **Michael Trunk** of Kline & Specter. "She can't talk. She can't make her needs known. I'm satisfied this settlement will let her mom get her the care she needs and deserves."