



## A Philly-based medical helpline told a worker to treat a diabetic ulcer with first aid. He won millions in a lawsuit after his foot was amputated.

The man was in contact with Workcompvidence staff for months before he became septic and required surgery. The company's attorney said there was no physician-patient relationship.



After a trial in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, a jury ordered the medical consulting company Workcompvidence to pay more than \$4.5 million to a construction worker who had his foot amputated after a diabetic ulcer was not properly treated. [Read more](#)  
Tom Gralish / Staff Photographer

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A Philadelphia medical consulting company and its owner may have to pay more than \$2.7 million to an Alabama man whose foot was amputated after he delayed in-person treatment while in contact with the company's medical professionals.

Gerald Tritt, 53, of Alabama, brought the lawsuit against Workcompvidence after he underwent a left-foot amputation at Lehigh Valley Hospital in November 2019.

The amputation stemmed from a diabetic ulcer that Tritt developed while working as a heavy equipment operator at a temporary construction job in Tampa during the summer of 2019.

From June through August of that year, Tritt had been in regular contact with the staff of a medical helpline, which a supervisor had encouraged Tritt to call, according to court documents. The helpline was run by Workcompvidence.

Acting on behalf of the company's owner, physician Louis Wai-Kai Lam, who is also a defendant, nurses called or texted Tritt every other day that summer, and received regular photos of his foot, according to the documents. Yet the nurses never encouraged Tritt to see a doctor, stop working, or do anything other than first aid to address his condition, Tritt's attorneys said.

The attorneys said that's because, unbeknownst to Tritt, Workcompvidence's job was to decrease compensation cost for an employers' worker by cutting down on sick time and reducing the number of employee visits to emergency rooms and clinics.

“Dr. Lam and Workcompvidence profited from steering injured workers away from medical care to save their employers money,” David K. Inscho and Helen Lawless, of Kline & Specter, said in a statement.

The total verdict found by the Philadelphia jury was over \$4.5 million, but the jury found Tritt to be partially at fault, reducing the tentative award owed by Workcompvidence and Lam to about \$2.7 million.

Gary M. Samms, an attorney representing Workcompvidence and Dr. Lam, said they were “shocked and disappointed” by the verdict.

“We don’t think it is supported by the evidence,” Samms, of Marshall Dennehey, said Monday. “And we plan on appealing this matter because there wasn’t even a physician-patient relationship.”

Because of this lack of relationship, Samms said in court documents, Dr. Lam did not have a legal obligation to care for Tritt the way he would a patient.

Dr. Lam and other Workcompvidence staff only arranged medical services if a worker requested it, court documents said. In addition, Samms said, Tritt’s amputation occurred months after he stopped working in Tampa.

When Tritt became septic, he and his wife had moved to Pennsylvania so he could work a construction job with his son at an Allentown-area brewery, according to his attorneys.

Last week, a Philadelphia jury returned its verdict, with damages including lost earnings and future medical treatment. Tritt’s attorneys said their client is permanently disabled, disfigured, and unable to work.

**Correction:** A previous version of this story misstated the total amount owed to Gerald Tritt by the defendants. The error has been corrected.