

# The Legal Intelligencer

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## Montco Jury Awards \$8M in Lawsuit Over C-Section Gone Wrong

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### What You Need to Know

- A Montgomery County jury \$8 million to a couple in their lawsuit over a cesarean section gone wrong.
- The verdict, against Abington Memorial Hospital, was awarded entirely for noneconomic damages.
- The plaintiffs' attorney said the jury was swayed by compelling testimony from the plaintiffs.

A Montgomery County jury awarded \$8 million to a couple late Wednesday in their lawsuit over a cesarean section gone wrong.

The verdict, which plaintiffs Laura and Randy Rongione won against Abington Memorial Hospital, was awarded entirely on noneconomic damages.

"The evidence on damages was compelling," said Kline & Specter's **Elia Robertson**, who tried the case with **Lisa**

**Dagostino**. Robertson said the jury reached its conclusion by listening closely to the plaintiffs' testimony about how Laura Rongione's injuries impacted their lives.

“The damages were consequential because of how much attention [the jury] paid,” she said.

According to pretrial documents, Laura Rongione suffered severe internal bleeding and went into hypovolemic shock following a 2013 C-section at Abington Memorial Hospital. She went into cardiac arrest and ultimately had to undergo an emergency hysterectomy and the removal of her fallopian tubes, the pretrial memos said.

The plaintiffs claimed that, in addition to losing her ability to bear additional children, Laura Rongione suffered “extensive” psychological damage, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

The plaintiffs alleged that Laura Rongione’s injuries occurred because doctors failed to properly inspect the surgical field while she was still in the operating room for the C-section and failed to diagnose her internal bleeding on time.

“Had the transected artery been diagnosed under more controlled conditions, the hypovolemic shock, cardiac arrest and hysterectomy would have been avoided,” the plaintiffs claimed in their pretrial memo.

The defendant, however, said the bleeding was spontaneous. In its pretrial memo, Abington Memorial Hospital said its providers all acted “well within the standard of care” and noted that the Rongiones’ baby was delivered without any neurological problems.

The hospital also contested the claim that the incident left Laura Rongione with psychological harm, saying she had received past diagnoses of depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

“I think the defense really minimized what Laura went through in the last 10 years,” Robertson said.

Benjamin Post of Post & Post, who represented Abington Memorial Hospital, did not respond to requests for comment.

Robertson said the plaintiffs gave testimony about how they had wanted to have more children and how the incident affected their relationship.

The jury awarded Laura Rongione \$5.5 million for pain and suffering, embarrassment and humiliation, and loss of enjoyment of life. Randy Rongione received \$2.5 million for the loss of society, comfort and companionship.

“We stuck to the facts,” Robertson said. “We really asked the jury to pay close attention to the facts and the evidence.”