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**\$14 Million Settlement for Infant Injured In Operating Room Fire**

**Chicago-January 14, 2015-** The family of a newborn girl, who suffered severe burns and permanent brain damage while undergoing heart surgery, reached an \$8 million settlement with a suburban Chicago hospital. The settlement was entered by Cook County Circuit Judge Janet Adams Brosnahan. Combined with an earlier settlement with the surgeon and anesthesiologist, the family's total settlement has reached \$14 million. The family was represented by attorneys William A. Cirignani and James C. Harman.

In October of 2009, a few weeks after the infant was born she went in for heart surgery. During the operation she was given a breathing tube with enriched oxygen, and an alcohol-based skin disinfectant was used as a preparation agent. When a hot cauterization tool was used by the surgeon, the combination of the alcohol vapors trapped under the infant's surgical drapes and the concentrated oxygen set her body on fire. The doctors did not immediately recognize the fire as it was concealed by the surgical drapes.

As a result of the fire, the girl lost her thumbs, the tips of other fingers as well as the tip of her nose. Her body was covered in burns and as the flames burned through her breathing tube her airway was blocked. She was deprived of oxygen for at least 15 minutes, triggering a cardiac emergency and brain damage. She now suffers from cerebral palsy. In November 2009, the girl's parents filed a lawsuit against the hospital and the doctors for failing to create and maintain safe conditions in the operating room.

The settlements in this case will ensure that the now 5-year old girl and her parents can rest assured that she will have the resources she needs now and in the future. "I think the most significant factor of this settlement is (the message) that a hospital needs to be responsible for creating a safe environment for its patients," said Cirignani. He continued, saying the settlement money will ensure she "will be taken care of, including her future surgeries, her specialized education and all the things she would need to live as close to a normal life as possible."

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