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LAW BULLETIN MEDIA

Family gets \$6M in fatal addiction

Plaintiffs contend opioid treatment led to woman's death

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A Cook County jury awarded \$6 million to the family of a woman who died as a result of an opioid addiction the family claims was caused by her doctor.

Ebeilda Ramirez, then 41, was under the care of pain management physician Holly S. Carobene with Comprehensive Pain Care in Harvey to manage neck and back pain from a work-related accident. Ramirez was treated by Carobene for about four years, starting in June 2011.

She was prescribed hydrocodone pain medication with refills nearly every month, according to the complaint. Carobene also

increased Ramirez's prescription several times as she reported no change in her pain level.

According to the plaintiff's attorneys, Ramirez began to abuse the opioids, which eventually led to her death. She died June 23, 2015 from respiratory failure related to her opioid use, the complaint stated.

Ramirez's husband, Jose, as independent administrator of the estate, filed wrongful death and survival claims in Cook County Circuit Court.

The complaint alleged Carobene carelessly failed to warn Ramirez of the dangers of opioid medications and carelessly failed to wean her from opioid treatment after she knew it was not working to relieve Ramirez's pain, among other claims.

The case went to trial July 10 before Cook County Cir-



Nicholas T. Motherway

cuit Court Judge John H. Ehrlich.

The jury returned a verdict in favor of the estate on Wednesday.

The award covers loss of society and grief and sorrow for the family, as well as pain and suffering and loss of a normal life for Ramirez.

The estate was represented by Patrick F. Bradley and Nicholas T. Motherway of Clifford Law Offices.

"I think [this verdict]



Patrick F. Bradley

should send a signal to pain management physicians to be more careful with how they prescribe these drugs," Bradley said.

Carobene and Comprehensive Pain Care were represented by Charles F. Redden and Hannah K. Wiens of Cunningham Meyer & Vedrine P.C. They could not be reached for comment.

The case is *Ramirez v. Carobene*, No. 2021 L 009652.