

# Napoli Shkolnik files medical malpractice suit against physicians for prescribing increasing doses of fentanyl (/stories/511333815-napoli-shkolnik-files-medical-malpractice-suit-against-physicians-for-prescribing-increasing-doses-of-fentanyl)

by Lhalie Castillo (/author/lhalie-castillo) | Feb. 16, 2018, 9:00am



EDWARDSVILLE — Napoli Shkolnik filed a suit on behalf of a deceased patient alleging several physicians prescribed increasingly high dosages of fentanyl for back and knee pain, eventually causing the patient’s death from acute fentanyl toxicity.

Barbara Miller, as special administrator of the estate of Charmaine Wren, deceased, filed the five-count complaint on Feb. 5 in the Madison County Circuit Court against William Thom, MD, JoAnn Adams, ANP-BC, Associated Physicians Group, Tammie Blevins, NP, Ryan Lueking, MD, Christie Weiss, NP, Tanya Walker, NP, and Highland Park CVS LLC, alleging they allowed the decedent to be exposed to a toxic and lethal dosage of fentanyl.

According to the complaint, Wren visited Associated Physicians Group on May 18, 2015, with complaints of back and knee pain. She continued treatment with the defendant until her death on Feb. 5, 2016. As part of her treatment, Wren was prescribed fentanyl and other opioid pain medication by the defendants.

“Fentanyl, a narcotic analgesic, is a very strong pain reliever. It is fifty to one hundred times as potent as morphine,” the suit states.

Miller alleges that Wren’s drug screenings indicate she was not an appropriate candidate for fentanyl.

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“Despite indications that decedent was likely to misuse or abuse fentanyl, the defendant medical providers continued to prescribe the Fentanyl patch to decedent in increasing dosage concentrations,” the suit states.

Her dosage started at 20mgs on June 15, 2015, and slowly increased to 75 mgs every 48 hours on Dec. 28, 2015. Wren eventually became dependent and addicted to the drug.

In January 2016, the defendants discussed a plan to wean Wren off opioids after months of “clear signs of drug abuse.” However, the dosage was not reduced.

Wren died on Feb. 5, 2016, from acute fentanyl toxicity.

Miller alleges the defendants knew or should have known that the opiate is “exceptionally strong, dangerous, and addictive, and requires increased scrutiny to prevent abuse, overdose, and death.”

She also alleges the defendant improperly prescribed and administer high dosage of fentanyl to decedent.

Miller seeks damages of more than \$50,000 for each count, plus costs of suit and all other applicable relief as the court deems just and proper.

She is represented by Wilson D. Sikes of Napoli Shkolnik PLLC in Edwardsville.

Madison County Circuit Court case number 18-L-148

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