

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Saxton & Stump Litigators Awarded Defense Verdict in Opioid Prescription Wrongful Death Case

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MARCH 5, 2019



We represented a rheumatologist who prescribed increasing doses of opioids for 10+ years to treat severe neck and lower back pain not improved by surgery. The patient died unexpectedly in her sleep. Based on a toxicologist's interpretation of postmortem blood concentration, the coroner concluded death was caused by the combined effects of opioids. Plaintiff claimed our client failed to diagnose an underlying arthritic condition that slowly worsened to cause respiratory insufficiency aggravated by opioids, and failure to closely monitor and coordinate care among

other physicians.

Using strong opinions from a team of credible experts, we proved death was caused by an asymptomatic, undetectable heart defect known to be fatal, completely independent of opioids. We also proved our client appropriately monitored the patient's opioid prescriptions without negligence. The arbitrator found no negligence.

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