

## Our Thinking: Press Releases

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### Related Practice

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## Romanucci & Blandin reaches record \$12.35 million settlement in a case where breast cancer was not diagnosed in a timely manner

February 11, 2020

Romanucci & Blandin, LLC (R&B) announced a record settlement on behalf of the family of a client whose doctors failed to diagnose her breast cancer in a timely manner, which ultimately led to her death at 37 years old. The settlement was secured by a medical malpractice legal team led by Stephan D. Blandin and Martin D. Gould and joined by Michael R. Grieco, Michael E. Holden and Debra L. Thomas and former R&B Attorney Rebecca Neubauer. Their client, a young, Polish-speaking mother, was a high-risk breast cancer patient with family history and a sister with breast cancer. The patient had lumps in her left breast and armpit that were ignored for two years. The health system and specialists misread ultrasounds and mammograms, failed to order timely biopsies and failed to communicate with each other, resulting in late-stage breast cancer when it was finally diagnosed in 2014. She died in 2016.

The defendants, in this case, were a hospital in the Chicago area and several physicians. During the litigation, it was revealed that one of the defendant doctors changed electronic health records the day before producing them to our legal team, in an attempt to cover up malpractice.

The \$12,350,000 million settlement is the largest in Illinois for an untimely diagnosis of breast cancer case.

“After years of delay and denial, our trial team was finally able to hold these physicians and hospital to account for their negligent conduct. In this day and age of breast health awareness, specialists need to advocate for their patients to obtain needle biopsies, which is the only test that can confirm breast cancer. Breast cancer is a studied disease, doctors know how to treat it, and survival rates are uniquely high, but early detection is key. Defendants gambled our client’s life with a wait-and-see approach. This was an easily preventable tragedy,” said Romanucci & Blandin Founding Partner Stephan D. Blandin.

“This case was about serious communication failures, created in part by an increasingly competitive and volume-driven healthcare market in the Chicago area. Our client’s tragedy could have been avoided if the OB/GYN, radiologists, and surgeon worked as a team, picked up the phone and discussed our client’s numerous red flags. When a specialist tasked with determining whether a patient has breast cancer spends 5 minutes with a patient, that is a problem. A tragic shortfall of the system is that patients do not have access to metrics regarding the quality, success or volume of their doctor’s work,” said Attorney Martin D. Gould.