

Jenner & Block Secures Significant Settlement in Prison Healthcare Case

News

October 31, 2025

During her incarceration at Decatur Correctional Center, Vikki Paris was denied adequate surveillance testing for bladder cancer. That failure would cost Vikki her life.

Jenner & Block took on Vikki's case pro bono, representing her husband John Paris—both as administrator of her estate and in his personal capacity—in a Section 1983 deliberate indifference lawsuit against Wexford Health Sources, a Pennsylvania-based company holding an exclusive contract to provide medical services to the Illinois Department of Corrections. The lawsuit alleged that Wexford's failure to provide proper cancer surveillance during Vikki's incarceration directly resulted in her death.

The team's advocacy extended beyond the courtroom. In 2020, they successfully secured clemency for Vikki—a hard-won victory that came too late. She passed away on March 16, 2020, just four days after her release. The family's fight, however, was far from over.

Over the next four years, the Jenner team logged nearly 5,000 lawyer hours navigating one of the most challenging areas of civil rights litigation. Section 1983 cases alleging deliberate indifference to medical care are notoriously difficult to prove, since plaintiffs must demonstrate not just negligence but conscious disregard of a serious medical need. The bar is high, and private healthcare contractors are well-resourced defendants.

On October 31, 2025, Wexford agreed to a settlement, bringing the matter to a close. The resolution reflects both the strength of the legal case and the team's sustained commitment to their client across four years of hard-fought litigation.

The outcome carries significance beyond the Paris family. Private prison healthcare contractors wield enormous power over the lives of incarcerated individuals, and accountability is rarely easy to achieve. This settlement underscores the constitutional rights of incarcerated individuals and the obligation of private contractors to meet their duty of care.

The team was led by Special Counsel Ali Alsarraf, under the supervision of Partner Mike Doornweerd, with significant contributions from Associates Elena Olivieri, Kai Luan, Kaela Theut, and Beth Lloyd, and former associates Karolina Bartosik, Emma Costello, Michael Kang, Henry Leaman,

Jocelyn Sitton, and Kendall Wharton. The team also received valuable support from Senior Paralegal Albert Peterson and Paralegal Adam Weidman, and former paralegals Kevin Garcia and Sophia Goebe.

Related Attorneys

Ali I. Alsarraf

Special Counsel
aalsarraf@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7376

Michael A. Doornweerd

Partner
mdoornweerd@jenner.com
+1 312 923 2631

Elena Marie Olivieri

Associate
eolivieri@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7413

Kaiwen Luan

Associate
kluan@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7237

Kaela Theut

Associate
ktheut@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7343

Beth Macnab Lloyd

Associate
blloyd@jenner.com
+1 312 840 7424

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