

Background

On March 30th, 2009, the Miami VA Hospital disclosed that the water tubes and reservoirs used in colonoscopies and endoscopies were being rinsed between procedures, but not disinfected as required by the manufacturer's specifications and proper medical practices. Similar procedures have taken place at VA Hospitals in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and Augusta, Georgia. As a result, thousands of veterans have possibly been exposed to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. As experts on clinical malpractice and hepatitis outbreaks, the attorneys and investigators at Brent Coon & Associates intend to investigate the occurrences in the Miami, Augusta and Murfreesboro to diagnose the scope of the problem and get actively involved to help the victims of this tragedy.

In March of 2008, a notification was released to nearly 40,000 patients who visited the Endoscopy Center of Southern Nevada and several associated clinics alerting them that the clinic had been reusing syringes and vials for nearly 4 years. It was reported that the clinic had been reusing these materials in an effort to reduce costs. Patients of the Endoscopy Center of Southern Nevada were urged to get tested for AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis B and C.

This notice was prompted by a trend of increased Hepatitis C cases at the Endoscopy Center of Southern Nevada. A report from the Centers of Disease Control had indicated that 14 hepatitis outbreaks, due to bad injections, had been reported in the US since 1999. Six cases of acute hepatitis, stemming from the Las Vegas hospital, had already been reported at the time.

Shortly after the initial report, attorneys Brent Coon and Dennis Weitzel headed a team for Brent Coon & Associates that investigated and interviewed over 400 potential clients in the Las Vegas Hepatitis outbreak case. Mr. Coon and Mr. Weitzel authored a "Patients' Bill of Rights" calling for more transparency in clinical procedures, criminal charges to be brought upon the offending clinics, state-wide investigations into health care safety standards and financial assistance for exposed patients.

Due to their early and ongoing involvement in that case, BCA is in the unique position to recognize the alarmingly close parallels between the Las Vegas hepatitis outbreak and what is shaping up to be a similar situation in the VA Hospitals in the Southeast just one year later. In effort to avoid future outbreaks, Brent Coon & Associates is calling for legislation that would tighten oversight and regulation of clinics and hospitals.

Brent Coon has been featured, interviewed, or served as an expert for 60 Minutes, Good Morning America, The Today Show, CBS Early Show, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, Financial Times, Houston Chronicle, The Fox News Channel, BBC radio, Business Week, Time Magazine, Agence France-Presse, CNN, Reuters, Dow Jones, Bloomberg, The Associated Press and many others.

Full details on BCA involvement in the Las Vegas outbreak can be found at:
<http://www.hepatitisexposure.com/>

Call for Legislation

Brent Coon & Associates, one of the largest plaintiff-only law practices in the country, and proponent of stricter oversight procedures for medical clinics and hospitals practicing unsanitary procedures resulting in the spread of Hepatitis-C, is now turning its attention to Southeast United States.

Brent Coon has been a longtime advocate of stricter regulations on the health care industry to further the quality of care patients receive and to help limit incidents of medical malpractice. He was instrumental in introducing new occupational safety regulations in Texas as a result of the Texas City BP plant explosion in 2005 that killed 15 workers. Mr. Coon authored the "Remember The 15" Bill that was introduced into the Texas State Legislature and he is determined do all he can to make a similar mark on the health care industry.

The legislation Mr. Coon and the BCA attorneys are championing includes:

- Routine inspections and grading components
- Mandatory reporting requirements
- Properly funded and staffed state agencies to inspect health care facilities
- Establishment of a uniform grading standard
- Prominent displays of grading results for patients to see

Statement from Brent Coon

"While we commend the VA for its open disclosure and transparency on this matter, we empathize with the thousands on United States Veterans that have potentially been exposed to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or HIV as a result of the hospitals negligence, it is our mission to protect the rights of those Veterans and do all that we can to ensure this matter is swiftly and properly investigated. If we don't learn from past mistakes, we're destined to repeat them. Our firm has dedicated ourselves to working tirelessly to expose the greed and malfeasance which resulted in the possible Hepatitis or HIV infection perpetuated on the American people in Las Vegas, and we intend to work just as hard for these new victims in Miami. We're calling for a deep investigation into this matter and we hope that this incident will finally lead to stricter oversight and regulation on the procedures that take place in these hospitals."

About Brent Coon & Associates

Brent Coon & Associates was founded in 2001. Today, with 13 offices around the country, it is one of the largest trial law firms in the nation and the epitome of the 21st century law practice. Brent Coon & Associates employs over 60 aggressive litigators, with solid experience in individual and complex multi-party, occupational/environmental, health and personal injury cases. The majority of the firm's cases are referred from attorneys who have confidence in the firm's integrity, expertise and solid work ethic. The firm has a proven track record for handling complex, multi-party cases, with an emphasis on occupational and environmental law and personal injury practice.

For more information about Brent Coon & Associates, please visit:

<http://www.bcoonlaw.com/>

