



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
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October 7, 2009

TO: SACHI A. HAMAI  
Executive Officer  
Board of Supervisors

Attention: Agenda Preparation

FROM: JOHN F. KRATTLI   
Senior Assistant County Counsel

RE: **Rafael Alarcon and Maria Alarcon v. County of Los Angeles**  
**Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. BC 398 372**

Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation regarding the above-referenced matter. Also attached are the Case Summary and the Summary Corrective Action Plan to be made available to the public.

It is requested that this recommendation, the Case Summary and the Summary Corrective Action Plan be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda.

JFK:rfm

Attachments

## Board Agenda

### MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation: Authorize settlement of the matter entitled Rafael Alarcon and Maria Alarcon v. County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. BC 398 372, in the amount of \$395,000, and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the Department of Health Services' budget.

This lawsuit concerns the care provided to a patient at the LAC+USC Medical Center - Inglese Psychiatric Hospital.

## CASE SUMMARY

### INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME	Rafael Alarcon and Maria Alarcon v. County of Los Angeles
CASE NUMBER	BC 398372
COURT	Los Angeles Superior Court, Central District
DATE FILED	September 17, 2008
COUNTY DEPARTMENT	Department of Health Services
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	\$395,000
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF	Peter McNulty
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY	Narbeh Bagdasarian
NATURE OF CASE	<p>This is a civil action brought by Rafael Alarcon and Maria Alarcon, the surviving parents of Jorge Alarcon.</p> <p>Jorge Alarcon was diagnosed with severe mental illness and was placed at LAC+USC Medical Center Ingleside Psychiatric Hospital ("Ingleside"), for observation.</p> <p>On June 2, 2008, while the staff at Ingleside were distracted by another patient, Mr. Alarcon committed suicide by hanging himself.</p> <p>Mr. Alarcon's parents filed an action against the County of Los Angeles alleging that the personnel at Ingleside Psychiatric</p>

Hospital failed to adequately monitor Mr. Alarcon, thereby creating the opportunity for him to commit suicide.

PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	\$12,421
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	\$2,050.05

# Summary Corrective Action Plan



Date of incident/event:	June 2, 2008
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	Jorge Alarcon was diagnosed with severe mental illness and was placed at Los Angeles County Ingleside Psychiatric Hospital. On June 2, 2008, while the staff were distracted by another patient, Mr. Alarcon committed suicide by hanging himself.

1. Briefly describe the root cause of the claim/lawsuit:

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to monitor high risk patient</li> </ul> |
|--|

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:  
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate personnel corrective actions were done</li> <li>• Existing policies for suicide monitoring were reviewed with all facility psychiatric nursing staff.</li> <li>• Rounds are conducted by supervisors on all shifts to monitor compliance with standards.</li> <li>• Rounds are conducted by supervisors on all shifts to monitor compliance with standards system-wide.</li> <li>• Facility polices and protocols for monitoring the patient at risk for suicide were reviewed and were found to be in compliance with all regulatory standards system wide</li> <li>• Policies were revised system-wide regarding the role and responsibilities of sitters assigned to continuously monitor patients to include a back up plan if the sitter is distracted or called away. The sitter may not leave the patient unless relieved by another staff member.</li> </ul> |
|---|

3. State if the corrective actions are applicable to only your department or other County departments:  
(If unsure, please contact the Chief Executive Office Risk Management Branch for assistance)

- Potentially has County-wide implications.
- Potentially has implications to other departments (i.e., all human services, all safety departments, or one or more other departments).
- Does not appear to have County-wide or other department implications.

Signature: (Risk Management Coordinator)	Date:
<i>W. Mendenhall</i>	7/14/09
Signature: (Interim Chief Medical Officer)	Date:
<i>K. Adams</i>	7/16/09
Signature: (Interim Director)	Date:
<i>G. [Signature]</i>	7-17-09