



## McLaren Port Huron Hit with Negligence Suit Over Death of 26-Year-Old Mother

**BRIANNA SMITH** — May 15, 2020

### McLaren Port Huron is facing a lawsuit alleging it was negligent when caring for a 26-year-old mother.

McLaren Port Huron was recently hit with a lawsuit over allegations that hospital staff was negligent when caring for 26-year-old Maria G. Handley. That alleged negligence ultimately resulted in her death. The lawsuit was filed yesterday by attorney Brian McKeen in St. Clair County Circuit Court and names Physician Healthcare Network, Dr. Paul Jerry, and Cassandra L. Herman, a physician assistant, as defendants.



What happened, though? Well, according to the lawsuit, Handley arrived at McLaren Port Huron's emergency room displaying "[clear signs of infection that included 102.4-degree fever, increased heart rate, and decreased blood pressure.](#)" Upon conducting a chest x-ray, it was discovered she had "infiltrates in the upper lobe of her right lung, indicative of pneumonia," [according to the](#)

[lawsuit.](#) Despite this, a complete blood count (CBC) was not performed, "which would have shown the degree of the infection and the type of bacteria causing it," the suit [argues.](#)

It's important to note that, at the time, Handley's immune system was already compromised due to having her spleen removed in 2006 because of spherocytosis, a hereditary disease that affects the shape of red blood cells. Additionally, six weeks before her death she was hospitalized for the C-section delivery of her son, the second of her two children.

Instead of properly treating Maria, the suit [alleges](#) hospital staff ignored her "precarious, asplenic condition and did not do laboratory testing that would have shown the degree of the infection and the type of bacteria causing the infection." Eventually, she was discharged and given an oral antibiotic. However, the next evening she "collapsed in her bathroom and her son's father took her back to the hospital, where she was found to be in septic shock," [the complaint states](#). She was air-lifted to Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit on March 17, 2017, and died the next morning on March 18, 2017, due to [complications of pneumonia](#). She left behind a 5-year-old and a newborn infant.

The suit [states](#):

*"The result was tragic, yet not unexpected. Maria's compromised immune system was overwhelmed by bacteria leading to septic shock and ultimately her death."*

McKeen [added](#):

*"This is one of the worst cases of negligence I have come across in my decades proving medical malpractice. Maria would have survived if she was treated properly and thoroughly and her condition considered thoughtfully. Patients like Maria who have had their spleen removed are particularly vulnerable, so it is imperative whenever there are any signs of infection they be admitted to the hospital. This young woman had obvious signs of infection and it is unfathomable why any care provider would let her leave the hospital under any circumstances. The fact that her condition was not taken seriously and her medical history not acknowledged in her treatment is deplorable."*