

Securing a Record-Breaking \$40,000,000 Birth Injury Verdict

The Largest Medical Malpractice Verdict in Illinois History Outside of Cook County

CASE NAME:	Campbell v. Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center
VENUE:	Coles County Circuit Court, Illinois
VERDICT:	\$40,000,000.00 (Jury Verdict)
CO-COUNSEL:	Miranda L. Soucie (Partner, Spiros Law, P.C.) & Michael F. Bonamarte IV (Managing Partner, Levin & Perconti)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 23, 2023, following a comprehensive three-week trial, a Coles County jury deliberated for less than three hours before returning a historic \$40,000,000 verdict for 19-year-old Kiera Campbell and her parents, Todd and Jaime Campbell. Jointly prosecuted by Miranda L. Soucie, partner at Spiros Law, P.C., and Michael F. Bonamarte IV, managing partner at Levin & Perconti, this landmark outcome represents the highest reported medical malpractice verdict in Illinois outside of Cook County, and the single largest civil verdict in the history of Coles County.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND & MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

The roots of this litigation began in May 2003 when Jaime Campbell, 40 weeks pregnant, arrived at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon, Illinois, during the early morning hours. She was experiencing severe abdominal pain, advanced cramping, and active bleeding—clear and clinical indicators of an acute placental abruption. A placental abruption is a life-threatening medical emergency where the placenta prematurely separates from the uterine wall, severely restricting or entirely cutting off the fetus's oxygen supply.

Despite the explicit, high-risk presentation, hospital nursing staff failed to immediately summon the attending obstetrician or initiate protocols for an emergency Cesarean section. The physician was not called to the hospital until the clinical scenario had devolved into a critical, irreversible crisis. As a direct result of this protracted delay in delivery, Kiera Campbell was subjected to severe, prolonged intrapartum asphyxia, resulting in permanent, catastrophic brain damage.

CATASTROPHIC LIFETIME INJURIES

Due to the neurological trauma sustained at birth, Kiera was subsequently diagnosed with a chronic seizure disorder, mild cerebral palsy, and profound developmental, cognitive, and speech delays. Over the next two decades, Kiera underwent intensive, near-continuous physical, occupational, and speech therapies. While her physical resilience allowed her to become highly functional on a superficial level—culminating in her high school graduation and part-time employment—profound cognitive deficits remained. Specialized neurological assessments confirmed severe, permanent impairments to her executive functioning, processing capabilities, and memory retention, permanently limiting her ability to live a completely independent adult life.

"This verdict shows that communities across this state, whether urban or rural, will not tolerate substandard healthcare. Our trial team prosecuted this case for 15 years, steadfastly rejecting the defense's position that Kiera's cognitive injuries were minimal. The jury's award perfectly reflects the just, complete compensation Kiera requires to secure her lifetime care."

THE 15-YEAR LITIGATION TIMELINE & TRIAL STRATEGY

The complaint was originally filed 15 years prior to the trial, when Kiera was four years old. Throughout a decade and a half of contentious litigation, the defense aggressively contested liability and minimized the severity of Kiera's long-term cognitive damage. Prior to picking a jury, the defense presented a final settlement offer of \$3,000,000, which was promptly rejected by the Campbell family upon advice of counsel.

At trial, the plaintiffs' legal team meticulously presented a detailed narrative of the hospital's systemic delay. The strategy centered on contrasting Kiera's visible, high-functioning physical capabilities with her invisible, debilitating cognitive and executive execution limits. Both Kiera and her parents provided powerful testimony regarding the daily impact of her brain injuries. In closing arguments, plaintiffs' counsel requested a damages award between \$35,000,000 and \$37,000,000. Recognizing the extreme level of negligence and future care needs, the jury exceeded the demand, awarding a full \$40,000,000.

ITEMIZED BREAKDOWN OF COMPENSATORY DAMAGES

The jury's \$40 million award was explicitly structured to address the extensive past and future elements of economic and non-economic harm:

DAMAGES CATEGORY	TYPE	AMOUNT ALLOCATED
Future Disability	Non-Economic	\$20,000,000.00
Future Caretaking Expenses	Economic	\$5,000,000.00
Past Disability	Non-Economic	\$5,000,000.00
Future Emotional Distress	Non-Economic	\$4,750,000.00
Future Lost Earnings	Economic	\$4,000,000.00
Past Emotional Distress	Non-Economic	\$750,000.00
Past Pain and Suffering	Non-Economic	\$500,000.00
Total Compensatory Award	Jury Verdict	\$40,000,000.00

LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE & PRECEDENT

This case establishes an important legal milestone across the state of Illinois. It emphatically disproves the long-held insurance defense assumption that catastrophic medical malpractice verdicts are exclusively restricted to metropolitan jurisdictions like Cook County. The result demonstrates that downstate and rural juries possess a sophisticated understanding of lifetime medical damages, economic loss, and deep emotional distress, and are fully prepared to hold regional medical centers accountable to the universal standard of care.

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