

Firm Successfully Defends Wrongful Death Case in Birmingham

Frank Stakely and William Haynes successfully defend internist in Birmingham. Defendant internist, as part of his on-call arrangement with several local internists, was contacted after-hours about a patient in the ICU who had become profoundly hypotensive. In discussing the patient's status with the ICU nurse, the internist concluded that the patient was hypotensive as a consequence of his congestive heart failure. Defendant internist ordered fluid and medication therapy. The internist had subsequent additional conversations with the ICU nurse concerning repeated hypotensive episodes, and an additional medication was added to the regimen. The physician did not go to the hospital to personally examine the patient, and the patient coded and died. As it turned out, the patient was suffering from internal bleeding into the retroperitoneal space, which was the probable cause of the persistent hypotension. Plaintiff contended the internist gave the wrong medications and that he should have gone to the hospital to examine the patient, and if he had seen the patient, he would have suspected a bleeding complication, ordered the appropriate test, and intervened with blood products in a timely fashion to avoid the patient's unfortunate death.

After two weeks in trial, the Jefferson County jury returned a defendant's verdict exonerating the internist in this action.