

788.

April 18, 2006

Administrative Closure
Alleged misdiagnosis (MCI# 2006-01512-HI-0314)
San Diego Healthcare System
San Diego, California

The Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General's Hotline Division received an allegation from a complainant regarding the care a patient received in the San Diego Healthcare System (HCS) Emergency Room (ER). Specifically, the complainant alleged that, on December 26, 2005, a 71 year old male patient presented to the ER with complaints of indigestion and severe chest pain. The ER physician made a diagnosis of gastro esophageal reflux disease/dyspepsia, prescribed an antacid (prilosec), and discharged the patient. According to the complainant, the patient's condition worsened and that same day he was admitted to a private hospital where he received a cardiac work-up, including a cardiac catheterization. The patient suffered a cardiac arrest on December 27, and died.

This case was referred to the OIG Office of Healthcare Inspections. On March 29, we received a call from the San Diego HCS Quality Manager who informed us that the ER physician in this case had received an "Intent to Sue" notice. On April 4, we contacted the complainant, who confirmed that the patient's family retained an attorney and plans to proceed with a lawsuit. We informed the complainant that, because they have elected to have this case reviewed by the legal system, the OIG will not investigate the case.

/s/

Julie Watrous

6-2