

HB 1359

2004

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the South Broward Hospital District;  
3 providing for the relief of Sharon Jurgrau, wife of Mark  
4 Jurgrau, deceased, and Megan Jurgrau, minor child of Mark  
5 and Sharon Jurgrau; providing for an appropriation to  
6 compensate them for the death of Mark Jurgrau as a result  
7 of the negligence of the South Broward Hospital District;  
8 providing an effective date.

9  
10 WHEREAS, in the summer of 1999, Mark Jurgrau, an architect,  
11 38 years of age and a resident of Broward County, underwent  
12 medical tests after exhibiting weakness and shortness of breath  
13 while engaging in athletic activity, and

14 WHEREAS, the tests revealed that Mark Jurgrau had a problem  
15 with the aortic valve of the heart, and as a result of the  
16 diagnosis, he was advised to have surgery to replace the aortic  
17 valve, and

18 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau's doctors recommended a surgical  
19 procedure known as the "Ross procedure" in which the patient's  
20 own pulmonic valve is used to replace the aortic valve, and

21 WHEREAS, the procedure, commonly used in younger patients,  
22 was chosen due to the fact that it is effective for a very long  
23 period of time and does not require the patient to take  
24 medications subsequent to surgery, and

25 WHEREAS, the Ross procedure was performed on Mark Jurgrau  
26 on September 2, 1999, at Memorial Hospital, part of the South  
27 Broward Hospital District, and

28 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau tolerated the procedure well and  
29 appeared to be doing fine, and

30 WHEREAS, the decision to replace Mark Jurgrau's aortic

HB 1359

2004

31 valve was a good decision, the choice of the Ross procedure was  
32 a sound choice, and the operation was performed ably and  
33 correctly, and

34 WHEREAS, however, one of the risks of this procedure is the  
35 possible occurrence of internal bleeding at the location of the  
36 operation, and

37 WHEREAS, internal bleeding following this procedure does  
38 occur from time to time, is easily recognizable and readily  
39 treatable, and is not an indication of negligence per se, and

40 WHEREAS, one of the primary reasons patients are kept in  
41 the hospital following this type of surgery is so they can be  
42 observed for complications, and

43 WHEREAS, the negligence in this case occurs in the blatant  
44 failure of the employees of Memorial Hospital to provide Mark  
45 Jurgrau with appropriate postoperative care, and

46 WHEREAS, following his operation, the management of Mark  
47 Jurgrau's care was entrusted to a nurse, Kathy Kater, ARNP, and

48 WHEREAS, the surgeon who operated on Mark Jurgrau never saw  
49 him again, and Kathy Kater and the other hospital nurses became  
50 Mark Jurgrau's health care team, and

51 WHEREAS, from the time of Mark Jurgrau's operation on  
52 September 2, 1999, to the time of his death on September 6,  
53 1999, Mark Jurgrau exhibited every possible sign and symptom of  
54 internal bleeding, and

55 WHEREAS, in order to monitor for internal bleeding, blood  
56 is drawn from a patient daily, and

57 WHEREAS, when a person is losing blood, laboratory values  
58 drop as blood contents are used up, and

59 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau's hematocrit, hemoglobin, and  
60 platelets were all plummeting, each day registering much lower

HB 1359

2004

61 than the day before, and

62 WHEREAS, in the 5 days he was in Memorial Hospital, Mark  
63 Jurgrau's blood values fell to less than 30 percent of normal  
64 and nothing was ever done to help him, and

65 WHEREAS, also, in order to determine if blood is  
66 accumulating in a patient's chest, X-rays are taken daily and  
67 the patient's breathing is monitored daily, and

68 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau's X-rays showed his lungs filling  
69 with blood, more each day than the day before, and

70 WHEREAS, his breathing decreased each day as the portions  
71 of his lungs that were full of blood could no longer transfer  
72 oxygen, and

73 WHEREAS, again, none of the staff at Memorial Hospital paid  
74 attention to or acted upon these indications, and

75 WHEREAS, as Mark Jurgrau's blood became depleted and his  
76 lungs filled with blood, he became deprived of oxygen, which  
77 made him weak, dizzy, and disoriented, as evidenced by the fact  
78 that his oxygen saturation fell precipitously, and

79 WHEREAS, despite the fact that all appropriate tests were  
80 administered and all the results of those tests indicated  
81 problems, no one at Memorial Hospital bothered to read or act  
82 upon Mark Jurgrau's test results, and

83 WHEREAS, by September 5, 1999, Mark Jurgrau was dying,  
84 slowly bleeding to death and drowning in his own blood, and

85 WHEREAS, as he became disoriented from lack of oxygen, the  
86 hospital nurses called Nurse Kater, and

87 WHEREAS, without even coming in to the hospital to observe  
88 Mark Jurgrau, Nurse Kater misdiagnosed him as having a panic  
89 attack and, over the telephone, ordered Xanax to be administered  
90 to Mr. Jurgrau, and

HB 1359

2004

91 WHEREAS, on September 6, 1999, Mark Jurgrau's condition  
92 became critical, and

93 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau was gasping for air, turning pale and  
94 cold, and writhing in pain, and

95 WHEREAS, Nurse Kater was again contacted, and again, via  
96 telephone, Nurse Kater misdiagnosed Mark Jurgrau as having a  
97 panic attack, and

98 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau arrested and a code blue was called,  
99 but it was too late, and

100 WHEREAS, Mark Jurgrau died at the age of 38, leaving his  
101 wife of 8 years, Sharon Jurgrau, and a 4-year-old daughter,  
102 Megan Jurgrau, and

103 WHEREAS, upon performing an autopsy, the medical examiner  
104 confirmed what should have been apparent to the staff of  
105 Memorial Hospital all along, that Mark Jurgrau died slowly and  
106 painfully from undiagnosed internal bleeding, and

107 WHEREAS, the case was also reviewed by the world's foremost  
108 authority in cardiac surgery, Dr. Dudley Johnson, regarded as  
109 the father of cardiac surgery and, along with Dr. Michael  
110 DeBakey, the co-inventor of the modern coronary bypass  
111 operation, and

112 WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson confirmed that Mark Jurgrau's death  
113 was unnecessary and unreasonable, and

114 WHEREAS, the negligence of Memorial Hospital in the death  
115 of Mark Jurgrau was blatant and tragic, and

116 WHEREAS, at the time of his death, Mark Jurgrau was in the  
117 beginning stages of a very successful career as an architect,  
118 and

119 WHEREAS, based on his age and proven earning potential,  
120 economic damages alone were over \$10,000,000, and

HB 1359

2004

121 WHEREAS, Mark and Sharon Jurgrau's daughter, Megan Jurgrau,  
 122 now 8 years of age, has experienced emotional distress as a  
 123 result of the death of her father, and

124 WHEREAS, recognizing this as a case of egregious  
 125 malpractice and catastrophic damages, the South Broward Hospital  
 126 District settled the matter, tendering \$200,000 pursuant to the  
 127 limits of liability established pursuant to s. 768.28, Florida  
 128 Statutes, and agreeing to support a claims bill in the amount of  
 129 \$500,000, NOW, THEREFORE,

130

131 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

132

133 Section 1. The facts stated in the preamble to this act  
 134 are found and declared to be true.

135 Section 2. The South Broward Hospital District is  
 136 authorized and directed to appropriate from funds of the  
 137 district not otherwise appropriated and to draw a warrant in the  
 138 sum of \$500,000 payable to Sharon Jurgrau, wife of Mark Jurgrau,  
 139 deceased, as compensation for the death of Mark Jurgrau as a  
 140 result of the negligence of the South Broward Hospital District.

141 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.