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Family awarded \$4.3 million in suit against doctors

Jury rules doctors misdiagnosed baby's virus

FORT LAUDERDALE - Doctors told the parents of newborn Haylee Kroll not to worry when large bruises appeared on her tiny body. Then the baby's skin turned yellow, her [liver](#) showed signs of scarring and a blood clot formed in her brain. A few days later, her parents were advised to make funeral arrangements.

"They'd tell us different things every day," said Cynthia Kroll, 35, Haylee's mother. "It was a roller-coaster ride."



Haylee Kroll, 15, stands with her mother Cynthia Kroll. The family was recently awarded \$4.3 million after a jury found she had been a victim of negligence by doctors at Coral Springs Medical Center 15 years ago.

Haylee survived, but her parents say doctors at Coral Springs Medical Center misdiagnosed the [virus](#) that struck their baby soon after her April 21, 1994 birth, leaving her with lifelong disabilities. Now 15, Haylee has severe vision problems and permanent [cirrhosis of the liver](#).

Last Wednesday, a six-member Broward Circuit Court jury awarded the family \$4.3 million in a medical malpractice suit against Sedigheh Zolfaghari and Jose Colindres, two of the doctors who treated Haylee. The jury found two other doctors, Greg Melnick and Manuel Ortega, not liable. Coral Springs Medical Center was not named in the lawsuit.

Colindres is still working at the medical center, but Zolfaghari is not, according to hospital officials. The doctors could not be reached for comment Friday.

Because of scheduling issues, the lawsuit had been often delayed since it was filed in 1996. The case ended in a mistrial in 2007, before going to court again in August.

"It's like a burden has been lifted from the family," Kroll said. But she said it's tough to forget what she and her husband, Jacob, 36, had to endure during Haylee's first months.

Once Haylee got sick, the doctors ignored symptoms that pointed to an enterovirus, a usually mild illness that can become deadly in infants without a developed [immune system](#). The doctors also failed to take blood and liver tests that would have quickly identified the virus, said Linda Alley, one of the attorneys who represented the Krolls.

The blood clot damaged parts of Haylee's brain, leaving her with a learning disability that affects her school work.

But despite lackluster grades, Haylee, now a 10th-grader at Deerfield Beach High, said she doesn't want tutors or special classes.

"I'm a normal girl. I don't want anything special, I just want to be normal," she said Friday.

She has a "bittersweet" relationship with her sister, Taylor, 11, and hopes to become a pharmacist. Just a few close friends know about the illness and she recently saw her baby pictures for the first time.

And she still grimaces at the yellow-tinged, heavily bruised baby the photos depict.

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