Nevada Jury Awards $500M for 2008 Hep C Outbreak

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A Nevada jury has awarded $500 million in damages to three Las Vegas residents infected in a 2008 hepatitis C (HCV) outbreak, KNTV reports.

The award went against two local health insurance companies—Health Plan of Nevada and Sierra Health Services—that sent patients to a doctor in the city they knew to be dangerous.

The health department believes two women and the husband of one woman became infected with hep C when nurses reused syringes at a clinic of Dipak Desai, MD. Desai was indicted in 2010 on 28 criminal counts related to the HCV outbreak.

Health Plan of Nevada must pay plaintiffs $270 million, and it plans to appeal the ruling. Sierra Health Services was ordered to pay $230 million. Plaintiffs Helen Myer and Bonnie Brunson have been battling the insurance companies in court since they contracted the disease five years ago.

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