

## **SURGICAL SPONGE LEFT INSIDE: VICTIM SUES ST. VINCENT'S**

BRIDGEPORT, March 6, 2013 – The owner of Monroe-based Knepler's Driving School is suing St. Vincent's Medical Center because of a botched surgery that left him on his back for months and with permanent injuries.

Gary M. Knepler, formerly of Trumbull and now of Boynton Beach, Fla., is suing St. Vincent's because a surgical sponge was left in his body during an emergency hernia operation in November 2010. Severe infection resulted along with a bowel obstruction, cardiac arrhythmia, and more than a dozen related medical conditions, some of which required additional surgery.

"Even after the hospital apologized for this error, they still sent me a bill for \$24,000 that my insurance would not cover because they said it was a clear case of malpractice," Knepler said. "That's when I called the attorneys."

"I had such a productive life before they did this to me," said Knepler, now 66. "They robbed me of so many things." He said he can no longer ride his bicycle, frequently feels his heart racing and is unable to perform many of his other routine activities. "For someone who owns a driving school, to be forced to limit when and where I drive, is just devastating."

A recent study by the John Hopkins School to Medicine<sup>1</sup>[1] estimates that a foreign object such as a sponge or towel is inadvertently left inside a patient's body after an operation 39 times each week in the United States. The research was reported in the journal *Surgery*.

In addition to Knepler, the suit names his wife, Julia L. Knepler, as a Plaintiff, stating the incident resulted in her being "deprived of the companionship and society of her husband" as well as loss of consortium.

The hospital has until March 19 to respond to the lawsuit. Knepler and his wife are represented by a team at the law firm Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder.

*Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder has offices in Bridgeport, New Haven, Danbury, and Stamford. The nationally known law firm has achieved record verdicts for people who suffer serious personal injuries or economic harm from medical malpractice, violation of their civil or constitutional rights, dangerous products, negligence, drunk drivers, corporate or governmental abuse and commercial misconduct. [www.koskoff.com](http://www.koskoff.com).*

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<sup>1</sup>[1] [www.hopkinsmedicine.org/surgery/faculty/Makary](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/surgery/faculty/Makary)