

# Electronic Newsletter

December 2010

[The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC](#)

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## Greetings!

The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck wishes you and your family a joyous and safe holiday season. We especially want to thank our clients and friends for your continued loyalty and trust, and look forward to another successful year.

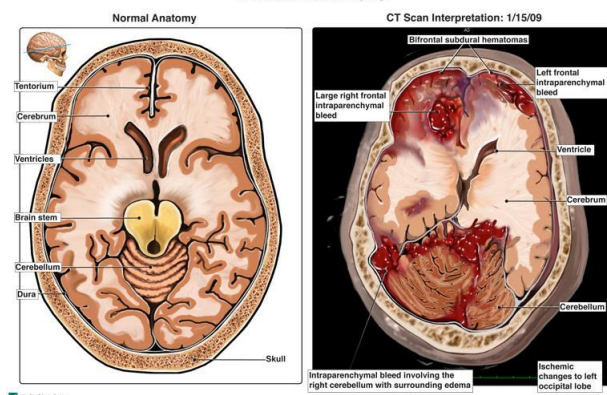
Sincerely,  
Stephen M. Reck, Scott D. Camassar and the staff at  
The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC



## The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck Settles Wrongful Death Case for \$845,000

The estate of a 75-year old Groton man settled its wrongful death claim for \$845,000 against the ambulance company that brought him to and from dialysis and the apartment complex where he lived, after eight days of jury selection and intense negotiations. Pedro Vasquez died January 16, 2009 after ambulance employees dropped his wheelchair two days earlier while trying to carry him in it up stairs into his apartment after a dialysis appointment. The wheelchair rolled down five steps and tipped back, causing Mr. Vasquez's head to strike a concrete step, resulting in a traumatic brain injury and massive hemorrhaging. The image below depicts the normal brain anatomy on the left and the results of the 1/15/09 CT scan of Mr. Vasquez's brain on the right. In addition to the negligence of the ambulance, the Estate claimed that the stairs were unsafe and lacked functional handrails. The Estate also claimed that the apartment complex denied numerous requests to put in a wheelchair ramp. All defendants denied negligence and claimed that Mr. Vasquez had no more than two years of life expectancy given his age and health problems. Attorney Scott D. Camassar handled the case for the Estate. The settlement is contingent upon probate court approval.

**Pedro Vasquez**  
Traumatic Head Injury



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## USA Today Calls for Solutions to Limit Preventable Medical Errors

[USA Today](#) editorial last month: "If a 747 jetliner crashed every day, killing all 500 people aboard, there would be a national uproar over aviation safety and an all-out mobilization to fix the problem." However, "in the nation's hospitals...about the same number of people die on average every day from medical 'adverse events,' many of them preventable errors, such as infections or incorrect medications. Where's the outrage?" USA Today goes on to recommend the expanded use of medical checklists, greater transparency to allow patients to evaluate their local hospitals, and use of financial incentives that would prevent hospitals from profiting from failure.

## Report: 1 in 7 Medicare Patients

## Harmed in Hospitals

The [Dallas Morning News](#) wrote that "A new federal report found that 1 in 7 Medicare patients experienced harmful medical care during hospitalization, extending their stays in many cases, contributing to the deaths of some and costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars." In the [report](#), the "inspector general projected that about 134,000 Medicare patients had endured so-called 'adverse events' like medication errors, delays in treatment and surgical mistakes. Another 134,000 experienced what the inspector general termed 'temporary harm,' such as prolonged vomiting and hypoglycemia."

## Reader Feedback



Last month we wrote about a report issued by the American Association for Justice called "[Standing Up For Seniors: How the Civil Justice System Protects Elderly Americans](#)." One of our readers forwarded it to a friend, who had this to say:

Bill,  
Much thanks...I read the report "Standing Up for Seniors" in its entirety....it is another disgraceful example of corporate exploitation of the most vulnerable segment of our population. The right wing is always criticizing trial lawyers...but this article, funded by the former Association of Trial Lawyers and substantiated with appropriate references, makes it clear why we need trial lawyers to challenge the corporate barons!

This is yet another example of the breakdown and polarization of our society where greed is good and the hell with everyone else!

I can personally verify many of the observations stated in the report from my personal experience when my mother was in a nursing home. Fortunately, as a result of my relentless intervention with the entire staff, she was spared many of the unsafe and irresponsible practices other patients experienced.

My review of conditions could have been the basis of an expose that would have included unethical doctors, conflicts of interest e.g., doctor-involvement in nursing home ownership, medical family "service businesses" supplying everything from hearing aids to false teeth, etc. . . . I can write a book based on my experience... one day during a visit, a nurse asked me what time I was planning to return to CT. I never gave the question a second thought until a confidant employed there took me aside and said, "She wants to know what time you're leaving because an inspection team from Harrisburg is here today and they're scared to death that you might talk to them."

George

## Drowsiness Related to 17% of Traffic Deaths

Drowsy driving causes more than 5,500 traffic deaths a year and is a factor in nearly 17% of all fatal crashes -- a much higher toll than previously estimated, according to a new analysis of federal data conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. A 1994 analysis found it was a factor in just 3.6% of fatal crashes, and NHTSA says it plays a role in 2%-3% each year. The AAA Foundation took on the project as it felt drowsy driving incidents are most likely under reported. The analysis, released to coincide with Drowsy Driving Prevention Week, includes a survey finding that 41% of drivers admitted to having fallen asleep behind the wheel at some point; one in 10 drivers said they had done so in the past year. Read [more](#).

## Apple Sued for House Fire Caused by Overheated MacBook Charger

Apple faces a lawsuit by Great Northern Ins. Co., which claims an overheated MacBook charger ignited a fire that destroyed a Connecticut home in 2008. The suit states that Carolyn Marziali "plugged in the laptop using the MagSafe adapter to charge the computer overnight in an alcove of her bedroom." In the middle of the night, the suit continues, Marziali and her father found the desktop area where the computer was charging set ablaze. According to the suit in the federal District Court in Hartford, the Glastonbury fire marshal "concluded that the laptop charger started the fire." The insurance company paid over a million dollars in damages. Great Northern alleges Apple "received a number of complaints posted on its website about problems with the MagSafe magnetic charger heating up, burning and sparking." Read [more](#).

## NJ Motorists Must Clean Off Snow, Ice Before Driving

Following record-breaking snow falls last winter in New Jersey, highway safety and law enforcement officials reminded motorists that beginning Oct. 20, an amended law goes into effect requiring that all ice and snow be removed from a vehicle before traveling on New Jersey's roadways. Failure to do so can result in a citation and fine. "Snow and ice left on a vehicle, in particular on the hood, windows and roof, can become a deadly projectile, creating a hazard for everyone on the road," said Pam Fischer, Division of Highway Traffic Safety Director. "The few moments it takes to clear ice and snow from your vehicle could prevent a crash or save a life." Article [here](#).

## Happy Hanukkah!



## Recall Central

To read about recent recalls and product safety news from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, click [here](#).

Get the latest recall information from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [here](#).

The Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service regulate meat, poultry products and processed eggs. Check their recalls [here](#).

Click [here](#) for Food and Drug Administration recalls, market withdrawals and safety alerts.

For updates on the peanut products recall click [here](#).

## Best Hospitals

The 2010 US News Best Hospital Rankings are [here](#).



# New AAJ Report on Dangerous Toys, Role of Civil Justice System



According to a [new report by the American Association for Justice \(AAJ\)](#), unforeseen hazards are still finding their way into toys despite recently improved safety standards,

illustrating the need for a strong civil justice system that protects children and holds negligent manufacturers accountable.

For years, corporations have knowingly shipped toys with hidden dangers like small parts, loose magnets, asbestos, and other toxic chemicals until outrage from parents and civil actions forced regulators or manufacturers to act. "As toys have become more sophisticated, so too have the risks associated with them," said AAJ President Gibson Vance. "Protecting our children requires vigilance from everyone. Regulators, parents, manufacturers, and the civil justice system all play a part in keeping dangerous toys off store shelves." Get the report [here](#).



Snow Scene by Gershon Camassar

## Proudly Serving Connecticut and Rhode Island

The trial attorneys at The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC represent individuals in all types of personal injury cases throughout the state of Connecticut and the state of Rhode Island, including, in Connecticut: New London County, New Haven County, Middlesex County, Hartford County, Tolland County, and Windham County; and in Rhode Island: Bristol County, Kent County, Newport County, Providence County, and Washington County.

**Referrals Welcome**

## About Our Firm



At [The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck](#), justice is our mission. Our firm is well known and well respected for its ability to handle personal injury, wrongful death, and professional malpractice cases in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Call today or visit us on the web at [www.stephenreck.com](http://www.stephenreck.com).

**Remember we are here if you need a referral to an attorney in a different area of law.**

## The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC

Proud to support the [North Stonington Education Foundation](#), [Little League Baseball](#), [Children International](#), and the [Conn. Chapter of the Special Olympics](#).

**\* Advertising Material \***

## Merry Christmas!



## Don't Drive Distracted!

**It Kills**



[KidsAgainstDistractedDriving.com](http://KidsAgainstDistractedDriving.com)

