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Suit says Tripler crippled newborn

Advertiser Staff

The parents of a 2-year-old boy filed a federal court lawsuit yesterday, alleging that Tripler Army Medical Center negligently treated the boy, causing him to suffer massive brain damage.

The suit against the federal government was on behalf of Parker Benjamin Kohl and his parents, Karen and Darius Kohl. It asks for unspecified damages.

The suit said Kohl was born a healthy baby Dec. 18, 2003, at Tripler, but was later diagnosed as having a heart defect. Before the defect could be fixed and because Tripler did not provide proper care, according to the suit, the boy developed a respiratory infection that required hospitalization in May 2004.

While hospitalized, Tripler personnel negligently treated him, the suit said, resulting in "ventricular fibrillation/cardiopulmonary arrest," which caused the brain damage later in the month and left the boy with "spastic quadriplegia," the suit said.

Spastic quadriplegia is the most severe affliction within the spastic cerebral palsy group, according to the March of Dimes Web site. Muscles become stiff and movement difficult. Spastic quadriplegia affects all four limbs and the trunk, and can involve the muscles controlling the mouth and tongue.

The suit said Tripler personnel negligently failed to monitor the boy's "blood gases or blood chemistries" the following month, which led to another cardiopulmonary arrest.

The family's attorney, Rick Fried, said the boy is blind and unable to walk. The boy is fed through a tube and also has a tube for breathing, Fried said.

Tripler officials could not be reached for comment late yesterday.

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