

Panos civil suit: Former surgeon testifies says he did not see sign of infection at first

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WHITE PLAINS — Former surgeon Spyros Panos testified he did a visual exam of a patient's knee and fluid from the knee during a December 2007 office visit, but decided the knee was not infected.

"Do you have microscopic vision, doctor?" asked plaintiffs' attorney, Jeffrey Schietzelt.

Panos said he did not. He said fluid he drew from Puiatti's knee Dec. 7 was clear, and fluid drawn Dec. 10 contained blood.

Panos is a defendant in a civil medical malpractice trial that began Wednesday in state Supreme Court at the Westchester County Courthouse in White Plains. Other defendants include Mid Hudson Medical Group, Vassar Brothers Medical Center and Dr. Julie Sim. Sim also testified Thursday before Justice Lewis Lubell. The trial is expected to resume today at 10 a.m.

Schietzelt is representing Sylvia Puiatti of Pleasant Valley, who is suing both as an individual and as executrix of the estate of her late husband, Bernard Puiatti, who died at age 78 on Jan. 19, 2008.

Schietzelt in opening statements alleged Puiatti had an infection that was not treated properly and that Puiatti's injuries and death were a result of medical malpractice by the defendants.

On Thursday, he asked Panos about Puiatti's visits to his office, including in October and December of 2007.

The case is just one of over 250 medical malpractice suits pending against Panos, according to Journal archives.

Panos answered questions Thursday morning and afternoon under direct examination by Schietzelt.

He asked Panos if he could objectively tell, by looking at fluid drawn from Puiatti's knee during two specific office visits, Dec. 7 and 10 of 2007, if there was a knee infection, and if he considered that an infection could be a cause of Puiatti's pain and knee swelling, which was the reason for Puiatti's visit.

"Doctor, did you consider that the knee might be infected," Schietzelt said.

"Absolutely," Panos said.

Schietzelt asked Panos how he ruled out infection.

Panos said he evaluated the patient, and observed how he was walking. He said a patient with a knee infection would typically call 911, not come in for a doctor's visit.

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