

News In Brief

## **Jury awards \$2 million to family of misdiagnosed woman**

PETERSBURG--A jury has awarded \$2 million to the family of a woman who died of bacterial pneumonia about 16 hours after she was misdiagnosed by an emergency room doctor as having the flu.

The Circuit Court jury deliberated six hours on Oct. 23 before making the award to the family of Elnora Pulliam, who died Dec. 15, 1995 after going to Southside Regional Medical Center with flu-like symptoms.

The verdict was against Dr. Thomas Anthony DiGiovanna, the doctor who treated Pulliam and sent her home with medication, and Coastal Emergency Services Inc. of Richmond. Coastal had a contract with Southside Regional Medical Center to provide emergency room physicians and was DiGiovanna's employer.

Pulliam, 41, of Disputanta, was a pre-kindergarten teacher at South Elementary School in Prince George County. She had worked for the county school system for about 17 years.

Pulliam had pneumonia caused by Group A Beta Hemolytic Streptococcus, a dangerous bacteria but one that can be treated with intravenous antibiotics if detected early enough, said Charles H. Cuthbert Jr., the attorney for the woman's family.

Joseph P. McMenamain, the attorney for the doctor and his employer, argued that Pulliam was so sick by the time DiGiovanna saw her that there was nothing that could have been done to save her.