

LOCAL NEWS

A CT woman lost her husband tragically. She claims misdiagnosis of depression led to his death.



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A judge's gavel rests on a book of law.

By [ED STANNARD](#) | estannard@courant.com | Hartford Courant
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A Shelton man died by suicide after his complaints of anxiety, depression and insomnia were ignored by a [Hartford HealthCare](#) neurologist, according to [a lawsuit filed by his widow](#) in Superior Court in Bridgeport.

On Dec. 9, 2021, [Gregory Merigliano Jr.](#), 71, reported those symptoms, as well as moving slowly, dragging his



He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, given the drug Sinemet and sent home, according to the lawsuit. Merigliano also was referred to occupational, physical and speech therapy.

The complaint filed by Merigliano's wife, Marie Merigliano, claims Dr. Benjamin J. Dorfman of Cheshire prescribed the Parkinson's drug before he had done a Parkinson's workup or a suicidal risk assessment on the patient. Dorfman told Gregory Merigliano he would consider prescribing the antidepressant mirtazapine if he continued "to be bothered by mood/anorexia/insomnia," the lawsuit states.

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Gregory Merigliano had "a strong family history of depression" and "an immediate family member" who had died by suicide, according to the complaint.

Dorfman also recommended an MRI to examine Merigliano's physical symptoms and told him to return in three months, the lawsuit states.

The complaint goes on to state that on Dec. 10 Marie Merigliano called Dorfman's office to say Sinemet was making her husband feel worse and "that he 'seemed out of it.'" She allegedly was told this was a normal reaction.

Three days later, Gregory Merigliano died by suicide.

The lawsuit claims Hartford HealthCare and Dorfman failed "to exercise reasonable care" in Merigliano's case and that Dorfman misdiagnosed Merigliano with Parkinson's disease in the absence of a workup, which includes neuroimaging, lab studies and a follow-up visit.

It also claims Dorfman failed to "appreciate the significance of the plaintiff decedent's new onset depression and anxiety" and "to assess the plaintiff decedent for homicidal or suicidal ideation" when Merigliano was first seen.

In addition, the complaints claims Merigliano should have been prescribed with an antidepressant and referred to a mental health provider or a hospital, and that Dorfman should have asked whether Merigliano had access to a dangerous weapon.

Attorney Jennifer L. Amdur of Berkowitz and Hanna in Shelton, who is representing Gregory Merigliano's estate and Marie Merigliano, issued a statement:

"My client Gregory sought care from a neurologist and during this visit he expressed serious mental health complaints, which went untreated despite the seriousness of these mental health concerns."

She continued, "While we cannot change what happened to Gregory, we hope that this lawsuit will bring better medical care for individuals with mental health concerns and accountability for the negligent care that Gregory received. Had the physician caring for Gregory's mental health concerns taken them seriously, he would still be with his loving family, who are deeply saddened by his passing."

Merigliano was a security supervisor at Greenwich Hospital for 17 years until he retired, his obituary said. He "enjoyed golfing, reading the N.Y. Times, playing solitaire and listening to music," and was "a die-hard fan of UCONN Women's Basketball," it said.

Dorfman declined to comment on the lawsuit. A spokeswoman for Hartford HealthCare said she could not comment on pending litigation.

Anyone in crisis can call or text 988 to be connected with a local health professional from the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, formerly known as the national Suicide prevention Lifeline. You may also text HOME to the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

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