



HASSARD
BONNINGTON LLP



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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

HASSARD BONNINGTON LLP, San Francisco, CA
Partner, 1986-Present

Ms. Richards' practice focuses on professional liability defense with an emphasis on medical and psychiatric malpractice and patient privacy issues. Ms. Richards' experience includes handling matters through mediation, arbitration and trial, as well as representing physicians in Medical Board investigations. In addition, Ms. Richards has extensive experience advising psychiatrists and physicians in virtually all areas of practice, on compliance with federal and state privacy laws, mandatory reporting requirements and issues related to the termination of patient care. Over the years she has litigated matters involving employment, product liability, psychiatric malpractice and privacy issues. Ms. Richards has advised physicians on HIPAA compliance and breach disclosure requirements, and has assisted health care providers with professional association peer review and investigations by the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Service.

TRIAL EXPERIENCE:

Alleged improper chemotherapy management: Decision in favor of defendant oncologist after three-day contractual arbitration. Plaintiff alleged oncologist improperly managed chemotherapy which caused an impaired blood supply to patient's leg, requiring amputation. Arbitrators found oncologist met standard of care; 1999.

Alleged breach of Confidentiality of Medical Information Act: Defense verdict for psychiatrist in multi-defendant case involving employment, psychiatric and patient privacy issues. The case presented a matter of first impression on the Confidentiality of Medical Information Act. It was tried to the trial court three times, went up on appeal twice, and finally resulted in a defense verdict for our client and the co-defendant psychiatrist; employer was found liable for monetary damages; 1992-1998.

Alleged failure of informed refusal: Wrongful death case alleging failure of informed refusal against internist working in the ED. Decedent was lucid in the ER and refused head CT scan after a fall. He died within 24 hours of complications from a brain bleed. Verdict for plaintiff after two-week trial; 1993.

Alleged psychiatric malpractice: Defense verdict for psychiatrist after five-week, multi-defendant trial. Plaintiff alleged psychiatric malpractice caused her psychotic break during an in-patient psychiatric hospitalization. Jury reached defense verdict for our client, and awarded damages against co-defendant hospital and psychiatrist; 1991.

Alleged negligent neck surgery: Defense verdict for surgeon after two-week trial. Plaintiff claimed surgery on a lymph node in her neck was performed negligently and caused an unsightly scar. Jury found surgery was indicated and appropriately done; 1990.

Alleged failure to timely diagnose and treat meningitis: Defense verdict for pediatrician after two-week trial. Plaintiff alleged failure to timely diagnose and treat meningitis in an eight-year-old boy which resulted in severe retardation. Jury found the defendant's treatment had preceded the manifestation of meningitis and met the standard of care; 1989.

EDUCATION:

University of California Hastings College of the Law, J.D.
Stanford University, B.A.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Hastings Comm/Ent Law Journal, Member (1984-1985), Articles Editor (1985-1986).

Bar Association of San Francisco, Lawyer Referral and Information Service Oversight Committee: 1987-present; Committee Chair 2006-2008; BASF Award of Merit for Services Committee Chair, 2008.

California Medical Association Amicus Committee, 2004-2014.

Editor, Chapter on Professional Liability, California Physician's Legal Handbook (CMA Publication) 2013, 2015.