

CA hospitals fined for endangering patients

The Associated Press

State health officials fined 12 California hospitals \$785,000 for mistakes that endangered patients on Thursday, including a doctor's improper use of a surgical device that investigators said resulted in a patient's death.

Three of the fines involved incidents where patients had objects left inside them after operations and had to undergo additional surgery. Others fines involved wrongly administered medications, the California Department of Public Health said.

Officials said the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Oakland was fined \$100,000 after a doctor failed to follow instruction on how to safely use a laser during surgery. State regulators said that as a consequence, a patient suffered a vascular embolism and died.

Another Kaiser Foundation Hospital in San Diego was fined \$75,000 after a doctor removed the wrong kidney from a patient during a surgery in late 2010. A state report said the loss of that elderly patient's only healthy kidney has left him suffering from chronic fatigue and depression.

Kaiser said all doctors using lasers at its Oakland hospital received laser safety training, and in the wrong kidney case, doctors are required to confirm the proper surgical site by looking at CT scans.

The fines for hospitals in Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Francisco, Tulare, Marin, Alameda and Del Norte counties ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

Source URL (retrieved on 01/28/2015 - 8:33am):

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