

**IN THE STATE COURT OF CLAYTON COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA**

CASSANDRA BARKSDALE,

Plaintiff,

v.

CECELIA PRESTRIDGE, KAISER
FOUNDATION HEALTH PLAN OF GEORGIA,
INC., KAISER FOUNDATION HEALTH PLAN,
INC., KAISER PERMANENTE INSURANCE
COMPANY and JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION FILE NO.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

COMES NOW the Plaintiff Cassandra Barksdale, and hereby files this Complaint for Damages and Demand for Jury Trial against Cecelia Prestridge, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia and John/Jane Does 1-5, (collectively, “Defendants”), showing this honorable Court the following:

PARTIES, JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1.

Plaintiff Cassandra Barksdale (“Plaintiff”) is a resident of Fulton County, Georgia. She is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court.

2.

Defendant Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia (“Kaiser”) process through its registered agent, Corporation Service Company, located at 2 Sun Court, Suite 400, Peachtree

Corners, GA 30092, located in Gwinnett County. Kaiser is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court. As a joint tortfeasor, once served, venue will be proper.

3.

Defendant Kaiser Foundation Health Plan Inc. (“KFHP”) is a foreign nonprofit corporation licensed to do business in the state of Georgia. Kaiser Foundation Health Plan Inc. may be served with process through its registered agent, Corporation Service Company, located at 2 Sun Court, Suite 400, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092, located in Gwinnett County. KFHP is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court. As a joint tortfeasor, once served, venue will be proper.

4.

Defendant Kaiser Permanente Insurance Company (“KPIC”) is a foreign insurance company licensed to do business in the state of Georgia. KPIC may be served with process through its registered agent, Corporation Service Company, located at 2 Sun Court, Suite 400, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092, located in Gwinnett County. KPIC is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court. As a joint tortfeasor, once served, venue will be proper.

5.

This is an action for damages because of torts, wrongs, or injury done in Clayton County. Specifically, at the Kaiser Permanente Southwood Comprehensive Medical Center located at 2400 Mount Zion Pkwy, Jonesboro, GA 30236.

6.

Kaiser Permanente Insurance Company, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc. and The Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Georgia individually and/or collectively have offices and/or

transact business in Clayton County. As per O.C.G.A. § 14-2-510(b)3, venue is proper in Clayton County.

7.

Defendant Cecelia Prestridge (“Prestridge”) is a resident of Cobb County and may be served with process at 3518 Birdfield Ct., Cobb County, Powder Springs, GA 30127. Ms. Prestridge is subject to the jurisdiction of this Court and venue is proper.

8.

At all times material and relevant herein, Defendant Prestridge was a Senior Laboratory Information Analyst for Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC.

9.

At all times material and relevant herein, Defendant Prestridge was an employee and/or agent and/or ostensible agent of Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC and was acting within the course and scope of said agency with said Defendants.

10.

Defendants John/Jane Does 1-5 are unknown employees and/or agents, and/or ostensible agents of one of more of Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC, whose identities are presently unknown to the Plaintiff, but whose identities are known to the Defendants.

11.

At all times material and relevant herein, Defendants John/Jane Does 1-5 were acting within the course and scope of said agency with Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC.

12.

Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC are vicariously liable for the negligent acts/omissions of any and all agents, either actual or apparent, employees and servants who were responsible for collecting, processing, transmitting Ms. Barksdale's endometrial tissue sample on or about March 10, 2025.

13.

To the extent any Defendant contends that another named Defendant, affiliated entity, subsidiary, parent corporation, or management company employed or exercised the right to control the individuals or operations at issue, Plaintiff pleads these allegations in the alternative pursuant to Georgia law and reserves the right to amend this Complaint upon completion of discovery concerning the corporate structure, employment relationships, and agency relationship among the Defendants.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

14.

Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in paragraphs 1-7 as though fully set forth herein.

15.

In early January 2025, Cassandra Barksdale presented to her OB-GYN, at Kaiser Permanente Southwood Medical Center in Jonesboro, GA for evaluation of uterine fibroids and complaints of abnormal uterine bleeding.

16.

As part of her medical evaluation, Ms. Barksdale was referred to Dr. Joanne Sweeney for a consultation.

17.

On March 10, 2025, Ms. Barksdale presented to Dr. Sweeney and underwent an endometrial tissue biopsy during that visit.

18.

Upon information and belief, the biopsy tissue specimen was collected, labeled, processed, and submitted to Quest Diagnostics-Atlanta, an outside reference laboratory, for pathological analysis.

19.

Upon information and belief, Cecelia Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5 were responsible for ensuring that Ms. Barksdale's tissue sample was properly collected, identified, labeled, processed and submitted to Quest Diagnostics.

20.

Upon information and belief, during the handling and processing of Ms. Barksdale's endometrial tissue sample, Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5 failed to maintain proper identification of the sample.

21.

Upon information and belief, Defendants Prestridge- JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5 failed to follow proper chain of custody procedures while handling and processing Ms. Barksdale's tissue sample.

22.

Upon information and belief, Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5 incorrectly identified and labeled another patient's tissue sample as belonging to Ms. Barksdale.

23.

Upon information and belief, Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5 transmitted incorrect specimen information and/or pathology materials to Quest Diagnostics for testing and interpretation.

24.

On or around March 12, 2025, pathology findings were reported by Quest Diagnostic revealing that Ms. Barksdale had high grade endometrial uterine carcinoma with serous features.

25.

On or around March 17, 2025, Ms. Barksdale received a call informing her that she had a high-grade, aggressive endometrial uterine cancer.

26.

During that call, Ms. Barksdale was advised that she would need a CT scan to determine staging of her presumed cancer.

27.

At the same time, Ms. Barksdale was also told that she would be referred to Northside Hospital for evaluation, treatment and/or additional testing of her presumed cancer.

28.

On March 19, 2025, Ms. Barksdale underwent a CT of her chest, abdomen and pelvis with contrast, which showed no evidence of cancer or spread of cancer.

29.

On or around May 7, 2025, Ms. Barksdale was evaluated by Dr. Adam Pyzark, a gynecological oncologist practicing at Northside Hospital Atlanta.

30.

Ms. Barksdale did not undergo any additional confirmatory testing prior to meeting with Dr. Pyzark.

31.

Upon information and belief, Dr. Pyzark reviewed the imaging records and pathology reports generated as a result of Ms. Barksdale's incorrect tissue sample.

32.

Based upon the pelvic examination he conducted and imaging and pathology findings provided to him, Dr. Pyzark recommended a total hysterectomy, bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy and lymph assessment with a minimally invasive approach (removal of her cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries and lymph node biopsies).

33.

Ms. Barksdale reasonably relied upon the cancer diagnosis and medical recommendations given to her by Dr. Pyzark.

34.

Ms. Barksdale reasonably relied upon the cancer diagnosis and medical recommendations given to her by Dr. Sweeney.

35.

Ms. Barksdale did not undergo any additional confirmatory testing prior to her total hysterectomy.

36.

On May 15, 2025, Ms. Barksdale underwent a total hysterectomy, with removal of her cervix, uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes and four lymph nodes.

37.

Upon information and belief, following the surgery, Ms. Barksdale's female organs and tissues were sent to a lab for pathological analysis.

38.

On or around May 16, 2025, Ms. Barksdale's cytology report from the surgically removed tissue indicated "no morphologically malignant cells are seen."

39.

On or around May 20, 2025, Ms. Barksdale's surgical pathology report confirmed that no carcinoma was identified, and no malignancy was seen in the entire endometrial cavity that was submitted.

40.

On June 2, 2025, Ms. Barksdale returned to Northside Hospital for a follow-up appointment.

41.

During that visit, Ms. Barksdale was informed that her surgical pathology report showed no evidence of cancer.

42.

Upon information and belief, on June 1, 2025, Dr. Pyzark informed Ms. Barksdale that he would discuss her case with other doctors and follow up with her about recommended treatment.

43.

Upon information and belief, Ms. Barksdale had a follow-up visit with Dr. Pyzark on or about July 1, 2025.

44.

Upon information and belief, during this July 1st encounter, Dr. Pryzak told Ms. Barksdale that she had cancer and that her treatment should include chemotherapy.

45.

Upon information and belief, during this July 1st encounter, Dr. Pryzak told Ms. Barksdale to wait for further instructions from Kaiser Permanente about her specific treatment plan.

46.

Ms. Barksdale was not told anything substantive about her condition by Kaiser Permanente or any other health care providers until September 23, 2025...some 4 months after her last discussion with Dr. Pryzak, when he advised her to wait for further instructions about treatment of her supposed cancer.

47.

On September 23, 2025, Ms. Barksdale met with administrators from Kaiser Permanente who, at that time, informed her that DNA analysis from the tissue sample that showed aggressive, high-grade endometrial uterine cancer was not her tissue and “belongs to a different patient.”

48.

On December 18, 2025, Ms. Barksdale received notice from Quest Diagnostics instructing her to disregard results previously reported on March 14, 2025, because the specimen “belongs to a different patient.”

49.

The updated lab results also indicated that it was amended due to a change in client information provided by Northside Hospital.

50.

As a result of the abject negligence of the Defendants, individually and collectively, Ms. Barksdale has sustained serious, permanent and irreversible injuries to her person, including but not limited to, surgical menopause, permanent and premature anatomical and physiological changes, severe mental pain, emotional distress, post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression, fear of future medical treatment, medical distrust, loss of bodily integrity and autonomy, embarrassment, humiliation, and diminished quality and enjoyment of life.

51.

Ms. Barksdale's injuries are the direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence.

COUNT I: NEGLIGENCE

52.

Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in paragraphs 1-33 as though fully set forth herein.

53.

Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, owed Ms. Barksdale a duty to exercise reasonable care in the identification, handling, labeling and tracking of her pathology specimen from her endocervical biopsy.

54.

Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, owed Ms. Barksdale a duty to Ms. Barksdale to ensure that her pathology specimen was accurately identified and attributed to her.

55.

Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, owed Ms. Barksdale a duty to Ms. Barksdale to ensure that no other patient's tissue sample was wrongly identified and attributed to her.

56.

Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, breached their duty when they:

- a. Negligently failed to properly label Ms. Barksdale's endometrial uterine tissue biopsy specimen;;
- b. Negligently submitted tissue specimens belonging to another patient to Quest Diagnostics under Ms. Barksdale's name and/or patient identification number, resulting in pathological analysis of the wrong tissue being attributed to her;
- c. Negligently failed to properly verify and confirm Ms. Barksdale's endometrial uterine biopsy tissue;
- d. Negligently failed to follow established laboratory protocols, policies and procedures designed to prevent specimen misidentifications and to ensure accurate specimen chain of custody procedures;
- e. Negligently failed to implement and/or adhere to appropriate specimen tracking and verification procedures at each step of the specimen handling process; and
- f. Otherwise acted in a negligent, careless, and reckless manner inconsistent with and below the applicable standard for Senior Laboratory Information Analysts.

57.

As a direct and proximate cause of Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5,'s negligent acts and omissions, Ms. Barksdale received an incorrect diagnosis of high-grade endometrial uterine cancer setting in motion the chain of events that led to Ms. Barksdale's, premature loss of her ovaries, premature menopause, and profound fear, anxiety and mental anguish from her belief that she had a aggressive, high-grade cancer.

**COUNT II: RESPONDEAT SUPERIOR – DEFENDANTS KAISER
FOUNDATION HEALTH PLAN OF GEORGIA INC., KAISER FOUNDATION
HEALTH PLAN INC. AND/OR KAISER PERMANENTE INSURANCE
COMPANY**

58.

Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in paragraphs 1-7 as though fully set forth herein.

59.

At all times relevant to this cause of action, Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, were employed by and/or were otherwise acting as an agent(s) or representative(s) of one or more of the Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC.

60.

Upon information and belief, one or more of the Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC are liable to Ms. Barksdale under the doctrine of respondeat superior pursuant to OCGA § 51-2-1 for the negligent acts and omissions committed by its agents, officers, and employees, including, but not limited to Defendant Cecelia Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5.

61.

Upon information and belief, one or more of the Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC controlled the time, manner, and method in which Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, executed and performed their job duties. Accordingly, one or more of the Defendants Kaiser, KFHP, and/or KPIC was the employer of Defendants Prestridge and/or JOHN/JANE DOES 1-5, and is therefore liable for their negligent acts and/or omissions.

DAMAGES

62.

Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all allegations contained in paragraphs 1-7 as though fully set forth herein.

63.

As a direct result of the Defendants' negligence, jointly and severally, Plaintiff endured an unnecessary surgery that has not only left her with the permanent loss of healthy reproductive organ, but has caused her to have premature menopause.

64.

As a direct result of the Defendants' negligence, jointly and severally, Plaintiff has suffered from profound emotional anguish, loss of bodily integrity and personal autonomy, post traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, embarrassment, diminished quality and enjoyment of life, and other economic and noneconomic damages, all of which are permanent or continuing in nature.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays as follows:

- (a) That their Complaint be filed, Summons issued, and service be perfected as in accordance with the law;
- (b) That all claims be tried by a jury;
- (c) For entry of judgment in her favor and against Defendants in an amount in excess of \$10,000.00 for damages for injuries, pain and suffering, permanent disability, future and past medical and economic costs and future and past wage losses, and any other damages recoverable at law;
- (d) That all costs be taxed against the Defendants jointly and severally, including attorneys' fees; and
- (e) That Plaintiff be granted such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted, this 4th day of August, 2026.

/s/ Shannan M. Young
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