

Attorneys Adam Hecht and Ed Ricci Achieve a \$70.8 Million Landmark Verdict

In a powerful demonstration of trial excellence and patient advocacy, **attorneys Adam S. Hecht and Edward V. Ricci** secured a **\$70,832,502 verdict** for **Chiaka Stewart**, a woman catastrophically injured by emergency department negligence at **Tampa General Hospital's Brandon Healthplex**. This landmark verdict, decided by a Hillsborough County jury on September 25, 2025, stands as a major achievement in medical malpractice litigation and a clear affirmation of accountability in healthcare.

Hecht and Ricci represented Ms. Stewart against Tampa General Hospital, Inphynet Contracting Services, LLC, and Heather Anderson, APRN, meticulously proving that a preventable medical failure altered their client's life forever. After a two-week trial, the jury agreed with the attorneys' central argument: had basic, well-established emergency protocols and decision making been followed, Ms. Stewart's injuries would never have occurred.

In July 2021, Ms. Stewart, then 38, arrived by ambulance at Tampa's Brandon Healthplex after experiencing the worst headache of her life and sensitivity to light and sound. Despite presenting with classic red-flag symptoms and known risk factors for blood clots—including diabetes and recent birth control use—sadly, no CT scan was ordered and a neurologist was not consulted. She was treated for her headache and discharged home after a few hours in the emergency room.

Attorneys Hecht and Ricci demonstrated to the jury that this failure fell below the standard of care. Once discharged home, Ms. Stewart suffered a devastating stroke caused by Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis, extensive blood clots in the veins of her brain. Although later treatment with intravenous heparin saved her life, the delay caused permanent and catastrophic harm that will impact her for the rest of her life.

Through expert testimony and precise trial strategy, Hecht and Ricci proved that a timely CT scan during the initial ER visit would have identified the condition and prevented the stroke

Unfortunately, as a result of the medical negligence, Ms. Stewart lives with blindness, left-sided hemiparesis, a neurogenic stutter, and severe cognitive deficits. The landmark **\$70.8 million verdict** ensures Ms. Stewart can live with dignity and access to lifelong care.