



**Young mother
in health crisis
reached out
for help.**

It never came.

On March 2, 2024, 36-year-old Valerie Vasquez (not her real name) was transported to an emergency department seeking help for severe abdominal pain, nausea, and difficulty breathing, symptoms she had been managing for one day while continuing to care for her three-year-old son, Miles. By the end of that afternoon, Valerie was dead. What should have been a straightforward emergency room evaluation spiraled into a tragedy that left her family searching for answers, and her young son without a mother.

Earlier that morning, emergency responders found Valerie weak, struggling to breathe, and with dangerously elevated blood pressure. Paramedics transported her to the hospital. At the hospital, Valerie received pain medication and diagnostic imaging. Critical laboratory results soon followed. Results signaled a medical emergency requiring immediate and aggressive intervention. Instead, Valerie's condition deteriorated rapidly. She went into cardiac arrest. Despite resuscitation efforts, she died later that same day. Valerie's father arrived at the hospital only after receiving a call informing him of her death, without any explanation as to what happened. Valerie's death certificate listed the cause only as "inconclusive." Months later, the Medical Examiner completed an autopsy. Still, the family was no closer to understanding how Valerie's condition had spiraled so quickly or why no emergent intervention had been initiated.

Under Florida's Wrongful Death Act, Valerie's only survivor was her son, Miles, who was just three years old when he lost the person who loved him most. Without any answers and not knowing where to turn or what to do, Valerie's family contacted

Searcy Law attorneys, **Karen Terry** and **Lindsay Reinhart** to investigate the circumstances of her death. Medical experts who reviewed Valerie's records identified multiple failures to recognize, communicate, and respond appropriately to her unstable and deteriorating condition. They concluded that there were missed critical opportunities that could have saved Valerie's life.

The defendants admitted liability and demanded arbitration under Florida Statutes which enabled them to take advantage of caps on non-economic damages that Miles had due to the loss of his mom. On March 2, 2026, exactly two years after Valerie's death, the case proceeded to pre-suit mediation. The parties reached a \$1 million

settlement, providing meaningful financial security for Miles as he grows up without his mother's presence, guidance, and love.

Valerie was a daughter, a mother, and a young woman whose life mattered. She did what all of us would do - she went to a hospital seeking help. She should have returned home to her son. Instead, Miles will grow up with only photographs, stories, and knowing that his mother loved him deeply. No settlement can restore what was taken from Miles on March 2, 2024. But this resolution ensures that Valerie's memory will be honored through the financial security now available to her one and only child. ♦

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