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\HD Clinic settles for \$2.6 million in case of botched
abortion
\BY Pam Weisz
\CR THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Forestville woman paralyzed in a botched abortion at a Suitland clinic will get a \$2.6 million payment and nearly \$10,000 a month for the rest of her life, under the terms of a settlement reached yesterday.

The settlement was reached just before Susanne Logan's case against officials of the Hillview Women's Clinic and other defendants was scheduled to go to trial in Prince George's County Circuit Court.

An attorney for Barbara Lofton, who ran the clinic, refused to discuss the case yesterday, saying only that "it was a reasonable settlement."

The case received significant media attention after state health officials said they did not have the authority to take action against the clinic under regulations in place at the time.

Health department officials said yesterday they will be able to regulate abortion clinics, under the new abortion law passed by voters last week. But abortion opponents, who used Ms. Logan's case in their campaign, said they doubt state regulation will improve under the new law.

Ms. Logan was 35 when she went to the Hillview Women's Medical Clinic in September 1989 for an abortion and was given a shot of Brevital Sodium. The anesthetic often causes shallow, infrequent breathing, but no one monitored her breathing during the procedure until her lips began to turn blue, said Patrick Malone, her attorney.

By the time she was finally resuscitated, Mr. Malone said, Ms. Logan had sustained severe brain damage. She now cannot walk, speak or swallow.

Although no one at the clinic admitted giving the drug to Ms. Logan, there is a record of her receiving it. Mr. Malone said doctors who use Brevital Sodium normally help the patient breathe with a ventilator.

"That should have been done here and was not," said Mr. Malone. "They just didn't pay attention to the patient."

Besides Ms. Lofton, the suit named Dr. Gideon Kioko, who performed the abortion; another physician at the clinic, Dr. Raymond Taylor; and a nurse. It also named Melvin Chaiet, the owner of Kay Cee Drugs in Forestville, where the drug was obtained. Mr. Chaiet referred questions to his attorney, who could not be reached.

Mr. Malone said Ms. Lofton "knew nothing about how to do abortions" but the clinic continued to operate until about six months ago. Even then, he said, "it closed itself. No state official closed it down."

State officials took no action because they could not, said Michael Golden, a spokesman for the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

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