

News

Trans woman faced two days of horrors in Norcross medical facility

By **Matt Hennie** February 22, 2021

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Attorneys Andrew Beal and Anita Bala of Atlanta law firm Buckley Beal. (Photos courtesy Buckley Beal)

A young transgender woman seeking medical help from a Norcross psychiatric center was instead denied medication and assaulted, strip-searched and faced two days of discrimination and harassment, according to a federal lawsuit.



Samantha Jolley, now 20, alleged the mistreatment started as soon as she arrived at Lakeview Behavioral Health Hospital. She sought medical help for her depression and suicidal thoughts. Instead, she faced sex discrimination, negligence, invasion of privacy, assault, battery and emotional distress, according to the lawsuit filed Feb. 5 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia

"It was a horrifying couple of days. It was like being taken prisoner for a while," said Andrew Beal, a partner in Buckley Beal, the Atlanta that filed the suit for Jolley.

Staff at the facility mocked Jolley shortly after her arrival on Feb. 14, 2019, according to the lawsuit. Two male nurses strip-searched her and refused to provide female nurses when Jolley requested them.

"The attendants laughed and mockingly asked, 'you have a penis, right?' They made her strip completely," the lawsuit stated.

The male nurses would not allow Jolley to cover her breasts. When allowed to put on her clothes, the men then patted her down and touched her breasts and inner thighs, according to the lawsuit.

When Jolley asked for her prescription medicine to treat her chronic daily headaches, staff denied her request and then repeatedly misgendered her. She was also denied her daily estrogen medication.

"In a conversation between the floor manager and two employees, one of the male employees who had mocked Ms. Jolley earlier at the nurses' station called Ms. Jolley a 'pill-seeking tranny' and a 'guy who thinks he's a girl,'" according to a lawsuit.

A patient advocate also harassed Jolly, and other patients questioned her gender, according to the lawsuit. An employee referred to Jolley as "just disgusting and delusional," according to the lawsuit.

"[Lakeview's] whole purpose and mission is to help people in crisis like her and for them to treat her in this most untrained and unprofessional way in violation of her rights is the basis of our claims," said Anita Bala, also a partner at Buckley Beal.

"To discriminate against somebody when they're in crisis is to us deplorable," Bala added.

Jolley's father intervened and had her discharged from the facility after two days of "agonizing pain" and mistreatment, according to the lawsuit.

Bala said Lakeview treated Jolley without any "common human decency."

"It's never okay to be mocking her and making fun and telling jokes about her," Beal said. "If you've got somebody who's highly depressed, or in a crisis situation, and you put them in a room with people who are making sexual jokes about them, and then sort of threatening her physically – how's that going to make anybody better?"

The lawsuit requests a jury trial, damages and attorneys' fees and costs. Lakeview's answer to the lawsuit is due March 4.

In June 2020, Buckley Beal scored [a historic win for LGBTQ equality in the U.S. Supreme Court](#). The firm represented Gerald Bostock when the Clayton County fired him for being gay. In a 6-3 decision in three

consolidated cases – including Bostock’s case – the court ruled that existing federal law prohibits discrimination against employees for being LGBTQ.

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