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# Transgender Woman's Suit Alleges Insults, Denial of Needed Meds at Norcross Psychiatric Hospital

Samantha Jolley's lawsuit describes two days of mistreatment at Lakeview Behavioral Health Hospital, including staff mocking her as a pill-seeker and calling her a derogatory term for transgender women.

By [Greg Land](https://www.law.com/dailyreportonline/author/profile/Greg-Land/) | February 11, 2021 at 02:43 PM



Andrew D. Beal (left) and Anita K. Bala of Buckley Beal. (Courtesy photos)

A lawsuit filed recently in Atlanta said a young transgender woman suffering from depressing and suicidal thoughts endured a harrowing two days at a Norcross psychiatric center, where she was denied prescription medication, strip-searched by male attendants and insulted by staff and fellow patients.

**Buckley Beal** (<https://www.buckleybeal.com/>) partner Anita Bala said her client had not resisted when her psychiatrist had her involuntarily admitted to Lakeview Behavioral Health Hospital for a 72-hour psychiatric observation.

"She was lucid, she was processing the effect of what was going on and what she was going through," said Bala. "Then she comes there and gets treated this way: mocked and denied treatment ... imagine a self-identifying woman being patted down and searched by male nurses and denied treatment just because someone has gender dysphoria.

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Firm partner Andrew Beal said the denial of medication to treat chronic migraines only made the experience worse for Samantha Jolley, who was born male but identified as female and is undergoing gender reassignment hormone therapy.

"They kept saying she couldn't see a doctor; they have this one-size-fits-all rule that nobody can see a doctor for 48 hours," said Beal. "So they not only deny her headache medication and her estrogen, which is essential to her transgender identity."

A staff member at Lakeview referred queries to a communications executive at an affiliated facility, Riverwoods Behavioral health in Riverdale, but she did not respond to requests for comment.

On Friday, Beal, Bala and firm associate Milinda Brown filed suit on Jolley's behalf in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

According to the lawyers and her [complaint](#) ([//images.law.com/contrib/content/uploads/documents/404/57982/NDGa-Jolley-v.-Lakeview-Behavioral-Health-complaint.pdf](https://images.law.com/contrib/content/uploads/documents/404/57982/NDGa-Jolley-v.-Lakeview-Behavioral-Health-complaint.pdf)), Jolley, now 20, has suffered from chronic daily headaches since age 13 and has been diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

In February of 2019, Jolley told her psychiatrist she was undergoing "acute suicidal ideation and needed urgent help."

She was first taken to Northeast Georgia Medical Center, where a doctor signed a Form 1013 authorizing involuntary treatment, then on Feb. 14, 2019, was admitted to Lakeview.

During intake, when she was wearing a hospital gown, two male nurses said they needed to strip search her.

"Ms. Jolley told them that she was a transgender female and that she was very uncomfortable being naked in front of them," the complaint said, and she requested that female staff perform the search.

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

At the time Jolley had been receiving hormone treatment for two years and tried to cover her developing breasts with her arms.

The male nurses let her put her gown back on then performed an extensive pat-down of her body. Jolley "had been molested as a child [and] was traumatized by the entire search," the complaint said.

She was then taken to a nurses' station where she complained of extreme pain from her chronic headache and asked for her medications.

"The nurse denied her any medication and repeatedly told Ms. Jolley that Lakeview could deny her access to a doctor for up to 48 hours," it said. "The two male nurses and the female nurse at the station joked and alternately referring to her as 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.'"

The next morning Jolley was in "agonizing pain" but was again told "they had 48 hours before she was entitled to see a doctor or get any medication."

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“Throughout the morning and day, staff members loudly joked about Ms. Jolley’s gender identification,” the complaint said. “In a conversation between the floor manager and two employees, one of the male employees had mocked Ms. Jolley earlier at the nurses’ station called Ms. Jolley a pill-seeker, a ‘guy who thinks he’s a girl’ and called her a derogatory term for transgender women.

Another patient reportedly asked what sex she was, explaining that “some of the patients had heard staff talking about Ms. Jolley’s transgender identity and were curious about Ms. Jolley’s gender.”

Later, when another staff member saw Jolley crying and hyperventilating she was taken to the nurses’ station, where she was offered acetaminophen or Amitrex. When she asked for her prescription medication, she was told there was nothing else they could do for her.

When she complained to a patient advocate about the denial of pain medication and the strip search, she was told “well, you’ve got a penis, don’t you? That’s why you were strip searched by male employees.”

She asked for a copy of her patient’s rights but again was denied, her complaint said.

When Jolley’s father asked about her complaints concerning the strip search, a nurse allegedly brushed him off as well, asking “you would prefer to have someone with the opposite sexual organs do a search?”

The following day Jolley heard employees “loudly mocking her. One employee said, ‘people like Sami are why I hate trannies.’ Another employee said Ms. Jolley is ‘just disgusting and delusional.’”

That day her father spoke to a psychiatrist and told her what Jolley was experiencing at the hospital, and he agreed she was “not being served at the facility.”

She was discharged that day.

Beal said there “conflicting information” as to how she was discharged, “but she couldn’t those conditions any more.”

Jolley’s complaint includes claims for violation of her rights under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibit sex discrimination by any program or entity that receives federal assistance.

Other claims include negligence, invasion of privacy, assault, battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Bala said a key decision by the Eleventh Circuit in last year’s *Adams v. School Board of St. Johns . Bd. of St. Johns City*, 968 F.3d 1286, “made clear that that transgender discrimination is prohibited under Title IX.”

“Certainly a behavioral health institution must be responsible and recognize its duty to protect some of vulnerable people in our society,” said Bala. “Using derogatory slurs, talking about her gender identity in front of other patients ... it’s just shocking to the conscience.”

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