

# \$1 Million Awarded for Loss of Leg

## Albuquerque Surgeon Negligent, Jury Says

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A Union County jury has awarded a Capulin area man more than \$1 million for a leg operation he said was performed so poorly that it resulted in his losing the leg within a month.

John Morrow, 52, son of longtime state Sen. John Morrow, won \$1,002,150 in a medical malpractice case against Albuquerque vascular surgeon Dr. Gopal Reddy after a trial last week in Clayton before District Judge Sam Sanchez.

The trial stems from a 1997 operation.

In a special verdict form filed with the court, the jury found Reddy negligent in performing the leg bypass surgery and that his negligence meant Morrow lost a chance to save the leg.

The jury found his damages were

\$1,179,000, including \$77,000 in past medical costs. A separate question for the jury reduced the total award.

Neither Reddy nor his Albuquerque attorney, Ben Allen, returned phone calls seeking comment.

But one of Morrow's lawyers, Dan Shapiro, predicted the verdict will be upheld despite the virtual certainty of post-trial defense motions to reduce the amount or throw out the verdict entirely.

Morrow was living in Santa Fe and working for the State Engineer Office — walking 10 to 15 miles a day — when he started experiencing severe leg pain, said Shapiro, an Albuquerque attorney who represented Morrow at trial.

Morrow first saw Reddy on Aug. 4, 1997, and the surgery was performed four days later. Morrow went home within a week, but by Aug. 18 he was readmitted because the graft had clotted. On Aug. 28 his leg was amputated, Shapiro said.

The lawsuit alleged Reddy used a

poor vein for the bypass and didn't do proper testing during or after the surgery.

Shapiro said an Aug. 11, 1997, test showed abnormal pressure in Morrow's ankle, indicating that the graft was failing, but that Reddy didn't follow up on it.

Morrow now has a prosthesis for the part of his leg that was removed below the knee and works on his family ranch.

But ranch work is especially difficult in those circumstances, and Morrow, a one-time champion rodeo competitor, also has continuing pain, Shapiro said.

Shapiro said the verdict represented pain and suffering, lost economic damages and past medical expenses, but not future medical expenses.

University of New Mexico economist Allen Parkman testified that Morrow's economic losses from being forced to leave a job he could no longer perform amounted to \$504,000, Shapiro said.