

Suits filed against scope maker in superbug infection

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(AP)—Two lawsuits target the maker of a medical scope linked to the outbreak of a superbug at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Attorney Pete Kaufman filed suit Monday on behalf of 18-year-old Aaron Young, who remains hospitalized after becoming infected, the Los Angeles Times reported (lat.ms/1zhO4bb).

The Los Angeles County Superior Court lawsuit claims negligence and fraud by Olympus Corp. of the Americas, which makes the difficult-to-clean duodenoscope involved in the outbreak of the deadly and antibiotic-resistant bacteria known as CRE.

On Wednesday, Kaufman filed a second suit on behalf of the family of Antonia Torres Cerda. The 48-year-old Corcoran woman died in November after allegedly becoming infected following a liver transplant.

Her family is suing the equipment maker for wrongful death, negligence and fraud. The claim seeks punitive and exemplary damages of an unspecified amount, the Fresno Bee reported (bit.ly/1GxPALU).

The hospital has said seven patients were infected with CRE after being examined with the scopes, and infections contributed to deaths of two of those patients. As many as 179 other patients may have been exposed from Oct. 3 to Jan. 28.

CRE, which stands for carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, is

highly resistant to antibiotics and can kill up to 50 percent of infected patients.

An email seeking comment from Olympus was not immediately returned Thursday. Olympus is a unit of the Japanese electronics giant.

UCLA and the University of California regents may be added as defendants after more investigation, Kaufman said. More patient lawsuits are expected.

UCLA has declined to comment on specific patients, citing confidentiality laws.

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