



Veteran has wrong testicle removed

Doctors at Los Angeles VA Hospital mistakenly operated on healthy one

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LOS ANGELES - An Air Force veteran has filed a federal claim after an operation at a Veterans Administration hospital in which a healthy testicle was removed instead of a potentially cancerous one.

Benjamin Houghton, 47, was to have had his left testicle removed June 14 at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center because there was a chance it could harbor cancer cells. It also was atrophied and painful.

But doctors mistakenly removed the right testicle, according to medical records and the claim, which seeks \$200,000 for future care and unspecified damages. He still hasn't had the other testicle removed.

"At first I thought it was a joke," Houghton told the Los Angeles Times. "Then I was shocked. I told them, 'What do I do now?'"

Houghton, his wife, Monica, and their attorney, Dr. Susan Friery, said they hoped to get the VA's attention by going public with the situation.

Dr. Dean Norman, chief of staff for the Greater Los Angeles VA system, has formally apologized to Houghton and his wife.

"We are making every attempt that we can to care for Mr. Houghton, but it's in litigation, and that's all we can tell you," he said. The hospital changed practices as a result of the case, he added.

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