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# Thomas M. Lent

Senior Counsel

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Erie – 814.480.7809



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Thomas practices in the areas of medical malpractice (physician and other providers), nursing home/long-term health care provider defense, physician disciplinary action defense, health care provider contract disputes (restrictive covenant, employment issues), general liability defense (premises, contract), employment law (unemployment, wage claims defense, Title VII, ADEA, FMLA), product liability defense and insurance/declaratory judgment defense. As well, Thom is regularly consulted on special education matters and retained to defend due process cases for school districts across Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Thom has handled several hundred medical malpractice and physician cases to date, representing a considerable number of physicians and medical professionals in northwestern Pennsylvania. Additionally, he has provided employment defense and counsel to physicians and other employers. Thom has taken 25 cases to trial, 24 of which were tried to a jury. He received 22 defense verdicts, while two of his cases ended in a verdict or settlement significantly below the settlement demands. Thom argued *Sagala v. Tavares*, an informed consent case, and despite an unsuccessful result, the position he argued was ultimately made part of the MCARE Act in Pennsylvania.

Thom was requested by a client to prepare six hours for a physician CME on risk management and HIV. Following this program, he was asked to teach the medical jurisprudence course at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. This required the preparation of 24 class hours of material. Thom presented the course for approximately eight years before the course became internet-based. Through his preparation, Thom became familiar with all of the state and federal statutes affecting the practice of medicine. He was also invited to speak to several LECOM graduating classes and lecture on licensure and risk management issues. Additionally, Thom has provided CME lecture services to local physicians' groups on various issues. He has also served as a panel member on various PBI seminars, mainly addressing litigation issues.

## Practices

- Medical Malpractice
- Long-Term Care Liability
- Miscellaneous Professional Liability
- General Liability

Thom began his legal career with the Erie firm of Marsh, Spaeder, Baur, Spaeder & Schaaf, becoming a partner in 1990. He handled primarily medical and legal malpractice cases, as well as matters in all areas of employment law. He also handled defamation defense cases for various local television and print media defendants.

Thom has been on the board of Northwest Legal Services for 20 years. He has been re-elected to another 10-year term after waiver of the two-term limit.

In addition to practicing law, Thom continues to play competitive ice hockey and for a time organized a charity game between a team of lawyers and one of law enforcement officers, appropriately called the "Law and Order Cup."

## **Education**

- Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law (J.D., 1983)
- Pennsylvania Western University, Edinboro (B.A., 1980)

## **Admissions**

- Pennsylvania, 1983
- U.S. District Court Western District of Pennsylvania, 1983
- U.S. Supreme Court, 1995
- New York, 2016

## **Honors & Awards**

- AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Best Lawyers in America®, Medical Malpractice Law - Defendants (2024-2026)
- Editor's Award, Outstanding Member of Law Review, Ohio Northern University College of Law (1982-1983 )

## **Associations & Memberships**

- Erie County Bar Association, Chair, Civil Litigation Section, 2014
- Northwest Legal Services, board member, 1986-present
- Pennsylvania Defense Institute

## **Classes/Seminars Taught**

- *Medical Jurisprudence*, course director and primary lecturer, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, 1995-2003
- *Employment Law Update*, Sterling Educational Services, 2003
- Various PBI sponsored seminars on litigation topics

## **Significant Representative Matters**

- Successfully defended a case for a nurse practitioner where the plaintiff was a 28-year-old wheelchair-bound woman alleging permanent disability, with a \$250,000 medical lien and a Life Care Plan with a \$14 million to \$4 million range.
- Successfully defended a licensure action where scientific evidence showed a chart alteration by the doctor.

- Represented class action group in collapse of insurance company, securing health care benefits and reimbursements.

## **Representative Cases**

- *Bearfield v. Hauck*, 595 A.2d 1320
- *Sagala v. Tavares*, 533 A.2d 165
- *Murray v. Corry School District*, 566 A.2d 645
- *Lazar v. RUR Industries Inc.*, 487 A.2d 29
- *Altomare v. Zucker*, 726 F.Supp 613
- *Learn v. Hibbard*, 19 Pa. D&C 4th, Aff'd 647 A.2d 271
- *Fandozzi v. Kelly Hotel*, 711 A.2d 524
- *Woodburn v. Consolidated Coal Co.*, 590 A.2d 1273
- *Murphy v. Aesthetic & Reconstructive Surgery*, 2 Pa. D&C 4th 273
- *Emert v. Farrah*, 33 Pa. D&C 4th 313
- *Mosakowski v. Presque Isle Clinical Group*, 7 Pa. D&C 4th 165
- *Williams v. Lemieux*, 831 F.2d 286
- *Gruber v. Hubbard Bert*, 675 F.Supp 281
- *Farkas v. Hustead*, 35 D&C 3rd 610