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\$850,000 Malpractice Settlement

Minetto v. Traflet: A radiologist paid \$850,000 on Oct. 14 to settle a Bergen County suit charging he failed to spot a nonmalignant spinal tumor on an MRI, causing a six-month delay in diagnosis that added to the patient's suffering and made treatment more difficult.

In July 2004, an orthopedist referred Michael Minetto, then 24, to diagnostic radiologist Robert Traflet of Oradell. But Traflet didn't notice the tumor and a correct diagnosis was not made for six months, according to the suit, filed by **Bruce Nagel** and **Barry Packin** of **Nagel Rice** in Roseland.

Nagel says the doctor conceded liability at a deposition and that the case settled on damages the day it was to be assigned for trial. Minetto has had two surgeries to replace vertebrae with bone and hardware, suffered increased pain because of the delay and will need more surgery, Nagel adds.

Defense lawyer **James Sharp**, who has a firm in Parsippany, did not return a call. Nagel says a defense expert opined that the treatments and the outcome would have been the same if the diagnosis had been made earlier.

— *By Henry Gottlieb*