IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

MARJORIE LAMB as next friend of A.B. and J.B. and R.B; and MARJORIE LAMB as Administratrix of the Estate of THOMAS BURNS,)))
Plaintiffs,)
V.) Civil Action No.
STANLEY TAYLOR; CORRECTIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES; CERTAIN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALEMPLOYEES OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION; RAPHAEL WILLIAMS; CERTAIN UNKNOWN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEESOF CORRECTIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES; and STATE OF DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION,	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED))))))))))
Defendants.)

COMPLAINT

PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb is a resident of Landenberg, Pennsylvania, and was the former wife of decedent Thomas J. Burns (who is hereinafter sometimes referred to as "Mr. Burns") at the time of the death of Mr. Burns.
- 2. Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb is the mother and next friend of her minor son A.B. (date of birth 1993) and her minor daughter J.B. (date of birth 1997), and her minor son R.B. (date of birth 1997), all of whom are the children of decedent Thomas J. Burns.
- 3. Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb as Administratrix of the Estate of Thomas J. Burns has been appointed Administratrix of the Estate of Thomas J. Burns by the New Castle County Register of Wills.

- 4. Defendant Stanley Taylor was the Commissioner of Correction for the State of Delaware at relevant times hereto, and in that capacity was the Chief Officer of the Department of Correction (the department will hereinafter sometimes be referred to as the "DOC").
- 5. Defendant Raphael Williams was at all times relevant hereto the Warden of the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (which was formerly often referred to as "Gander Hill," and which will hereinafter be referred to as "HRYCI").
- 6. Defendants, unknown individual employees of the DOC, were, on information and belief, involved in the care and custody of Thomas J. Burns, either directly or indirectly by virtue of their obligations to properly administer such care and custody, at relevant times hereto.
- 7. Defendant, State of Delaware Department of Correction, is a subdivision of the State of Delaware.
- 8. Defendant, Correctional Medical Services (hereinafter sometimes referred to as "CMS"), is, on information and belief, a corporation responsible, at all times relevant hereto, for the performance of medical services within HRYCI pursuant to a contract with the State of Delaware.
- 9. Defendants, unknown individual employees of CMS, were, on information and belief, involved in the care and custody of, either directly or indirectly by virtue of their obligations to properly administer such care and custody, at relevant times hereto.

JURISDICTION

10. The United States District Court for the District of Delaware has jurisdiction over the parties and the claims by virtue of the pendency of a federal claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343, and under the principles of ancillary and pendent jurisdiction as well as the supplemental jurisdiction provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

FACTS

- 11. Decedent Thomas J. Burns graduated from Delaware Law School of Widener University in 1983, but on information and belief, he never took the Delaware (or any other) bar exam.
- 12. Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb was married to decedent Thomas J. Burns on March 19, 1993, and was divorced from Mr. Burns on July 6, 2000.
- 13. During the marriage of Marjorie Lamb and Thomas J. Burns, Mr. Burns demonstrated behavior that indicated that he suffered from mental illness, and this behavior led directly to their divorce.
- 14. Beginning shortly before the divorce became final and continuing thereafter, Mr. Burns initiated multiple lawsuits against Ms. Lamb, Ms. Lamb's business, Ms. Lamb's relatives, and others; these lawsuits raised false allegations against the defendants, and indicated the existence in Mr. Burns of an irrational and troubled mindset.
- 15. The irrational and troubled mindset of Mr. Burns also manifested itself in behavior that was disturbing and threatening to Ms. Lamb and others.
- 16. As a result of Mr. Burns' irrational and threatening conduct, Ms. Lamb sought assistance from the Family Court of the State of Delaware and others.

- 17. In an apparent attempt to discredit the actions of the Family Court relating to his divorce from Ms. Lamb and subsequent matters, Mr. Burns forged documents suggesting that a Family Court judge presiding in the divorce action had been improperly influenced as a result of business dealings between the judge and Ms. Lamb; no such business dealings had ever occurred, however, and the suggestion that they had occurred was solely the product of Mr. Burns' troubled mind.
- 18. Mr. Burns was prosecuted and convicted by the State of Delaware for forging documents relating to the Family Court judge.
- 19. After his conviction, when he failed to appear in court for sentencing, Mr. Burns became subject to a warrant for his arrest.
- 20. On information and belief, at some point in or near the time of his conviction, Mr. Burns submitted a document to the Department of Justice entitled "Stay of Death Sentence" or words to that effect; again, this document had no relevance to his legal situation, but appears to have been an indication of his troubled mind.
- 21. In apparent awareness that he was about to be arrested, Mr. Burns attempted suicide with pills and alcohol in late May of 2006, and was taken to Christiana Hospital.
- 22. The police became aware of his presence in Christiana Hospital, and upon his release from the hospital he was taken into custody and housed at HRYCI.
- 23. On information and belief, Mr. Burns was initially placed on suicide watch at HRYCI.
- 24. Officials of the Department of Correction, including Defendants Stanley Taylor, and Raphael Williams were placed on notice that Mr. Burns was at great risk for suicide by local

mental health advocates, including Patricia McDowell of the National Alliance of the Mentally Π 1.

- 25. On information and belief, CMS personnel were aware of Mr. Burns' psychiatric problems and of the risk of his suicide.
- 26. On information and belief, despite the risk of suicide, Mr. Burns was removed from the suicide watch on which he had been placed by a CMS counselor, and was placed on a less restrictive watch, and was provided with, among other things, bed sheets.
- 27. Shortly before 5:00 a.m. on May 30, 2006, Mr. Burns was found in his cell at HRYCI, having hanged himself with a bed sheet.
 - 28. Mr. Burns was pronounced dead on May 30, 2006.

COUNT I

VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER COLOR OF STATE LAW, 42 U.S.C. § 1983 – CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT (BY MARJORIE LAMB AS ADMINISTRATRIX AND NEXT FRIEND AGAINST ALL INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANTS AND CMS)

- 29. Paragraphs 1 to 28 are restated as if more fully set forth herein.
- .30. The vulnerability of Thomas J. Burns to suicide constituted a serious medical need of which defendants knew or should have known, and the actions and/or inactions of defendants, under color of state law, in addressing or failing to address that need, constituted deliberate indifference which could be expected to lead to substantial and unnecessary suffering, injury, and/or death, and which did, in fact, lead to the death of Mr. Burns.
- As a result of the wrongful actions of the Defendants, Mr. Burns suffered 31. attendant physical injuries, mental anguish, pain and suffering, and death, and was deprived of his right to life and his right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment, for which Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb as Administratrix and next friend and individually now seeks compensation.

COUNT II

VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER COLOR OF STATE LAW,
42 U.S.C. § 1983 – FAILURE TO TRAIN AND/OR MAINTENANCE OF WRONGFUL
CUSTOMS, PRACTICES AND POLICIES AND/OR DENIAL OF LIFE AND LIBERTY
WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW AND CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT
(BY MARJORIE LAMB AS ADMINISTRATRIX AND NEXT FRIEND AGAINST CMS
AS A PERSON AND AS A STATE ACTOR, AND AGAINST
INDIVIDUAL CMS DEFENDANTS)

- 32. Paragraphs 1-31 are restated as if more fully set forth herein.
- 33. In performing its medical services for the DOC, CMS and the individual CMS Defendants were state actors performing state functions under color of state law.
- 34. The death of Thomas Burns was the direct result of the customs, practices, policies and procedures of CMS and the individual CMS defendants, including but not limited to: a failure to properly train and supervise CMS personnel so as to properly recognize suicidal inmates and how to properly care for inmates identified as making previous attempts on their life, and/or a failure to institute appropriate procedures for the timely transmission of important medical information to appropriate personnel.
- 35. The aforesaid actions of CMS and the individual CMS Defendants amounts to deliberate indifference to the rights of inmates, including the rights of Mr. Burns.
- 36. As a result of the wrongful actions of the Defendants, Mr. Burns suffered attendant physical injuries, mental anguish, pain and suffering, and death, and was deprived of his right to life and his right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment, for which Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb as Administratrix and next friend now seeks compensation.

COUNT III

VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER COLOR OF STATE LAW, 42 U.S.C. § 1983 – FAILURE TO TRAIN AND/OR MAINTENANCE OF WRONGFUL CUSTOMS, PRACTICIES AND POLICIES (BY MARJORIE LAMB AS ADMINISTRATRIX AND NEXT FRIEND AGAINST THE STATE OF DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND THE INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANT EMPLOYEES OF THE DOC INCLUDING STANLEY TAYLOR AND RAPHAEL WILLIAMS)

- 37. Paragraphs 1 to 36 are restated as if more fully set forth herein.
- 38. The death of Thomas J. Burns was the direct result of the customs, practices, policies and procedures of defendant Stanley Taylor, defendant Raphael Williams, the individual DOC defendants, and the defendant State of Delaware Department of Correction, including but not limited to: a failure to properly train and supervise DOC personnel so as to properly recognize suicidal inmates and how to properly care for inmates identified as having made previous attempts on their life, and/or a failure to institute appropriate policies and procedures for the timely transmission of important medical information to appropriate personnel and the failure to institute appropriate policies and procedures for the care and handling of suicidal inmates.
- 39. The aforesaid actions of Defendants constitute deliberate indifference to the rights of inmates who come into contact with employees of the DOC and CMS, including the rights of Mr. Burns.
- 40. As a direct and proximate result of the actions of the Defendants, Thomas J. Burns suffered attendant physical injuries, mental anguish, pain and suffering, and death, and was deprived of his right to life and his right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment, for which Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb as Administratrix now seeks compensation.

COUNT IV

WRONGFUL DEATH UNDER 10 DEL. C. § 3724 (BY MARJORIE LAMB AS ADMINISTRATRIX AND AS NEXT FRIEND, AGAINST CMS AND THE INDIVIDUAL DEFENDANTS)

- 41. Paragraphs 1-40 are restated as if more fully set forth herein.
- 42. The aforesaid actions of the Defendants caused the wrongful death of Thomas J. Burns.
- 43. Plaintiffs are authorized to recover for the damages they have suffered as a result of the wrongful death of Thomas J. Burns pursuant to the terms of 10 Del. C. § 3724, and they have suffered severe damages as identified thereunder, including but not limited to the loss of companionship and support of their husband and/or father, Thomas J. Burns, with attendant and severe emotional anguish.

COUNT V

SURVIVAL ACTION UNDER 10 DEL. C. § 3701 FOR MEDICAL MALPRACTICE (BY MARJORIE LAMB AS ADMINISTRATRIX AND NEXT FRIEND AGAINST CMS AND THE INDIVIDUAL CMS DEFENDANTS)

- 44. Paragraphs 1-43 are restated as if more fully set forth herein.
- 45. The aforesaid actions and inactions of the Defendants, and other actions and inactions, constituted medical malpractice, causing great pain and suffering, physical injury, and death to Thomas J. Burns.
- 46. Plaintiff Marjorie Lamb as Administratrix and next friend is authorized to recover for the damages suffered by Thomas J. Burns as a result of the medical malpractice of the Defendants, pursuant to 10 Del. C. § 3701.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs demand that judgment be entered in their favor against Defendants on the above claims, including awards of compensatory damages, punitive damages,

costs of suit, interest, attorneys' fees under 42 U.S.C. § 1988 and any other appropriate or relevant statutory or common law basis, and such other and further relief as this Court may deem appropriate.

> By: /s/ Jeffrey K. Martin #2407 Jeffrey K. Martin, Esq. (#2407) Martin & Wilson, P.A. 1508 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 1-C Wilmington, Delaware 19806 (302) 777-4680 jmartin@martinandwilson.com

/s/ Herbert G. Feuerhake #2590 By: Herbert G. Feuerhake, Esq. (#2590) 521 West Street Wilmington, Delaware 19801 (302) 658-6101 herblaw@verizonmail.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIN ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM).

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS				DEFENDANTS			
	friend of A.B. and J.B. and	R.B. and Marjorie	Lamb	Stanley Taylor, Correctio	nal Medical Services; Certain	unknown individual	
as Administratrix of the	Estate of Thomas Burns	_		employees of the State of	Delaware Department of corre	ection; Raphael Williams;	
(b) County of Resider	nce for First Listed Plaintiff	New Castle County		Certain unknown individu	al employees of Correctional	Medical Services; and	
(EXCEPT IN U.S	. PLAINTIFF CASES)						
				County of Residence of F		<u> </u>	
Jeffrey K. Martin, Esq. Herbert G. Feuerhake, Esq.				·			
Martin & Wilson, P.A. 521 West Street			NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE				
1508 Pennsylvani		n, DE 19801		LOCATION C	F THE LAND INVOLVED		
Wilmington, DE							
(302) 777-4681 <u>herblaw@verizonmail.com</u> Attorneys (If Known)							
jmartin@martinandwilson.com							
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only) HI. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)							
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IV NATURE OF SU	IT (Place an "X" in One	Pov Only)					
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Benefits	☐ 360 Other	Property		Relations	(405(g))	☐ 850 Securities/	
☐ 160 Stockholders'	Personal Injury	Damage		730 Labor/Mgmt.	SSID Title XVI	Commodities/	
Suits		385 Property		Reporting &	☐ 865 RSI (405(g))	Exchange	
☐ 190 Other Contract	CIVIL RIGHTS	Damage		Disclosure Act		875 Customer	
195 Contract		Product		740 Railway Labor Act	FEDERAL TAX	Challenge	
Product	441 Voting	Liability		☐ 790 Other Labor	SUITS	12 USC 3410	
Liability	442 Employment			Litigation		☐ 890 Other Statutory	
☐ 196 Franchise	443 Housing/	PRISONER		791 Empl. Ret. Inc.	☐ 870 Taxes (U.S.	Actions	
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V. ORIGIN (Place an "	X" in One Box only)						
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VI. CAUSE OF	Cite the U.S. Civil Statute up	der which you are filing	(Do not cite jurisdictional	statutes unless diversity):			
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VII. REQUESTED IN	☐ CHECK IF THIS IS A C	LASS ACTION	DEMAND S CHECK YES only if demanded in compla		ded in complaint:		
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VIII. RELATED CASE	(S) (See Instruction):	****					
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