



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Nurse Charged With Neglecting Patient Who Died**

A local nurse was arraigned in Butte County Superior Court yesterday on an allegation that she failed to appropriately check on a hospital patient who died as a result of her negligent care.

Allison James Guster, 38, of Chico, appeared before Judge James Reilley for arraignment on a felony charge of Elder Abuse with an additional enhancement of causing the death of a senior over 70 years old.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey said on April 26, 2016, Janna Adamson, 71, of Willows, was recovering from a routine surgery at Enloe Hospital when Guster, then a registered nurse, began a night shift at 7:00 p.m. Ramsey said Adamson's doctor's orders to the nursing staff included checking the patient's vital signs at least every four hours – particularly the patient's oxygen level through a pulse oximeter. Guster was responsible for Adamson's care during that night shift.

Ramsey said at 3:50 a.m. other hospital staff went into the patient's room and discovered she was cold and unresponsive. A "code blue" was called, and, despite efforts to resuscitate her, Adamson was declared dead.

A hospital video surveillance camera outside the Adamson's room showed, despite the doctor's orders, Guster only entered the victim's room once at 9:26 p.m. Investigators also discovered Guster falsified logs regarding the patient's treatment, by adding false log entries claiming she checked on the Adamson at midnight and at 2:00 a.m. Investigators also determined the pulse oximetry monitor had been turned off at 8:48 p.m.

Ramsey said a subsequent autopsy determined Adamson died of pulmonary insufficiency, a condition which would have been treatable if discovered in time. Enloe Hospital reported the incident to the California State Board of Registered Nursing, who investigated the case through the Department of Consumer Affairs and submitted it to the Butte County District Attorney's Office for felony prosecution. Ramsey said Guster faces, if convicted, up to 11 years in state prison.

Guster initially appeared in Butte County Superior Court on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 and through her attorney asked to remain out of custody on her own recognizance. A deputy attorney general, representing the state nursing board in its regulatory capacity, appeared in court that day and

asked Judge Kimberly Merrifield to order Guster to surrender her nursing license and not work as a nurse as a condition of continued release. Judge Merrifield was told Guster had left Enloe and was then working as a nurse at Rideout Medical Center in Yuba City. At the end of the hearing, Judge Merrifield ordered Guster to surrender her license and not work as a nurse pending her criminal Elder Abuse case.

Yesterday Guster's defense attorney appeared before Judge Reilley and asked him to reconsider Judge Merrifield's earlier ruling. Judge Reilley said the motion was filed late and he needed more time to consider it. Guster's arraignment was continued to June 14, 2017 when it is expected Guster will enter a plea of not guilty and be set for a preliminary hearing.