



# Columbia/JFK Medical Center v. Spunberg, 784 So.2d 541 (Fla. App. Ct. 2001)

Topics Covered: Medical Staff, Due Process and Hospitals

**Outcome: Very Favorable**

## **Issue**

The issue in this case was whether a hospital violated medical staff bylaws by refusing to renew the staff privileges of two radiation oncologists.

## **AMA Interest**

The AMA supports the enforceability of medical staff bylaws.

## **Case Summary**

This case arose from a hospital's refusal to renew the staff privileges of two radiation oncologists, because of the hospital's business decision to exclusively contract with the University of Miami School of Medicine for all radiation treatment of cancer patients. The hospital did not claim that its decision to not renew the privileges of the two radiation oncologists was based on their competence or conduct. Rather, the decision was based solely on its right to enter into an exclusive contract with other physician groups.

The two radiation oncologists filed an action for a preliminary injunction and damages, alleging that the hospital breached its medical staff bylaws, Florida statutes, and the administrative codes, all requiring that reappointment and renewal of privileges be judged on quality-based criteria and not on any additional business or economic rationales. The trial court granted the preliminary judgment, and the hospital appealed. The appellate court affirmed the injunction, and the case then went to trial. The jury then found in favor of the plaintiffs and awarded them \$2.5 million in lost profits and \$20.25 million in punitive damages.

## **AMA Involvement**

The AMA filed an amicus curiae brief, joined by the American College of Radiology, the Florida Medical Association, and the Florida Radiological Society, arguing in favor of enforceability of the medical staff bylaws.