

# Know Your Limits

February 2025

## Doctor Awarded \$21 Million in Discrimination Lawsuit—Employment Practices Liability

A Washington jury found that a hospital created a hostile work environment based on a doctor's race, awarding the doctor \$21 million in damages. The doctor, who is Black and was the medical director, accused the hospital of allowing institutional racism for years. He also claimed the hospital retaliated against him when he brought attention to the racism and the disparate treatment and health outcomes of people who are Black. According to the lawsuit, the hospital permitted the use of racial slurs, failed to remedy known incidents of systemic racism, fostered an environment of conformity to the racial inequity status quo, and subjected Black and brown employees to a double standard. The plaintiff's attorney noted that the doctor found it difficult to go to work where racial issues were so pervasive and predominant. The doctor ultimately resigned, and the hospital system launched an internal investigation into the claims.

## Health Care and Well-being Company Agrees to \$69 Million Settlement—Fiduciary Liability

A Minnesota health care and well-being company agreed to settle a 2021 class-action lawsuit for \$69 million. The lawsuit alleged the company offered its employees suboptimal 401(k) options, resulting in hundreds of millions in lost investment gains. According to the lawsuit, the company offered these options as the default for investors to maintain its business relationship with a major bank that was a large customer. Attorneys for the plaintiffs said the class could include more than 300,000 people. In addition to the company, the chief financial officer and former CEO were also named as defendants. The settlement is subject to the approval of a U.S. District Court judge who had previously written about the millions of dollars of business conducted between the two entities that injected business interests into the process of selecting the plan.

## Jury Awards \$15 Million to Woman Who Lost Leg After Staircase Accident—Liability

A Pennsylvania jury awarded a woman \$15 million after determining the owner and building management company were responsible for the loss of her leg following complications of an ankle injury she sustained from slipping on a staircase with no handrail. According to court records, the woman was a tenant in an apartment building, and the 2022 incident resulted in a broken ankle that required surgery with a hardware implant. However, the woman developed an infection, and the physicians had to amputate her leg below her knee. The plaintiff contended that the accident would not have occurred if the staircase had been up to code with proper lighting and a handrail.

## Man Receives \$29 Million Jury Award Following Cycling Accident—Auto Liability

A Pennsylvania jury awarded \$29 million to a man who suffered a brain injury after being hit by a plumbing company's truck while riding his bike. The driver of the truck and the plumbing company were named as defendants in the case. The injured man has not been able to live independently since the accident. The plaintiff's attorney claimed that the cyclist had the right of way, and the driver had the responsibility to yield. The lawsuit also contended that the truck's driver was not paying attention to his surroundings. The jury's award included \$16 million for pain, humiliation, disfigurement caused by injuries and loss of enjoyment of life's pleasures.