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Two more suits allege infection from hospital

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stuart — Two more former Martin Memorial Medical Center patients filed lawsuits this week against the hospital, saying they contracted staph infections while at the hospital.

The new cases, filed in Martin Circuit Court Tuesday, bring the number of active cases filed against the hospital for the infections to more than 13.

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what they came in to be treated for," said Gloria Seidule, a Stuart attorney representing many of the former patients.

In the latest two cases, one man was admitted to the hospital for shortness of breath an abdominal pain in March 2005 and another man was admitted for back spasms in September of the same year.

James Flanagan of Martin County and Willie Berthia of St. Lucie County are asking for at least \$15,000 each in damages from the hospital.

Martin Memorial officials have said they will defend themselves vigorously.

Hospital spokesman Scott Samples said the hospital follows rigid safety protocols to ensure that infections are not spread from one patient to another.



In every case, the former patients said they contracted the methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infection while at the hospital to be treated for other illnesses. In at least one previous case, the wife of a former patient said the infection led to her husband's death.

"In many of these cases, what they ended up getting from the hospital is worse than

"We will continue to defend ourselves in these cases and let the legal process work," Samples said.

Staph infections that occur in hospitals come mainly through the hands of health-care workers, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The infections occur most frequently in health-care facilities.

But recent years have brought about a large number of community-contracted methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* cases.

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