

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

VOLUME 166

LAW BULLETIN MEDIA.

Levin & Perconti bolsters birth-injury practice with Md. duo

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The plaintiff's firm Levin & Perconti added two attorneys from Baltimore this month as part of its effort to expand its practice nationally.

Dov Apfel and Seth Cardeli, who both focus on traumatic birth injury litigation, joined the firm on Nov. 1. They were previously with Pikesville, Md.-based Janet Janet & Suggs LLC.

Levin & Perconti has tapped Apfel to assist on several difficult cases over the past 10 years.

Apfel was co-counsel with Levin & Perconti attorneys in a recent suit that ended in a \$14 million settlement with a Chicago-area hospital, according to records published by the Jury Verdict Reporter in April.

Specific case details were not included in the JVR report. The case was brought by a family whose child suffered hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy — loss of blood flow to the brain — during birth, leaving them with intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy.

That \$14 million settlement allowed Apfel's Balti-

more firm to place 19th in Chicago Lawyer magazine's 2020 JVR Settlements Report. It also counted as part of Levin Perconti's \$74 million in total settlements reported, which placed it fourth overall.

Levin & Perconti founding partner Steven M. Levin called his new colleagues "the most knowledgeable birth injury lawyers in the country" particularly because of Apfel's decades of experience.

"These are complicated cases that usually involve multiple expert witnesses, and he knows every expert witness in the business, no matter which side they are testifying on."

Apfel and Cardeli have represented families in birth injury cases in 25 states, according to the firm announcement.

In an interview Tuesday, Apfel said he always hoped to assemble a "dream team of lawyers and paralegals" who handle birth injury cases — and he believes he's found that match.

"I worked with Steve Levin and the team at Levin & Perconti on a couple of cases and saw they had a really

good foundation of skilled lawyers who could be part of that team," he said.

Apfel said when he was asked to join Levin & Perconti he "wanted to bring the two most valuable members of my team with me to the new firm," referring to Cardeli and paralegal Kim Martel.

Apfel and Cardeli worked together at Janet Janet & Suggs for nine years, and Martel has served as Apfel's paralegal for all 12 years he was at the firm.

In July, Martel was named Paralegal of the Year by the American Association for Justice at the national plaintiff bar association's annual conference.

Levin says it's possible the firm could open an office in Maryland in the future, but it's not an urgent decision to make.

"It's not an immediate need with everyone working remotely right now," Levin said. "One of the foundations of this partnership is the shared belief that practices are coming to be organized by specialty rather than geography, especially in our current world."

"The landscape of legal

profession is changing," Apfel said. "Instead of going to your family lawyer or someone who might be known locally, people are going online and seeking out experts in the field nationally."

Levin & Perconti's practice is primarily in Illinois, but its attorneys have worked on nursing home cases in other states. Levin said he hopes the addition of Apfel and Cardeli will not only expand the firm's practice nationally but also "deepen our existing birth injury practice in Illinois."

"We are thrilled to have them joining the firm," said Levin. "Their advocacy sets the standard for handling these complex and difficult cases in a way that truly makes a difference in the lives of injured children and their families."

Levin said the current situation of working virtually during the pandemic has given everyone a chance to "plan bigger things" for the business, and that the firm may be making more additions in the near future as it continues to expand.

"Our goal is to be known as the go-to national birth injury firm," he said.