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Bias Case Referred by NYC Bar Ends in \$6.2M Verdict

Andrew Keshner, New York Law Journal

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A pregnancy discrimination case initially referred to plaintiffs attorneys through the New York City Bar's legal referral service has resulted in a \$6.2 million verdict.

Unable to find attorneys willing to take their case, three women who said they were the victims of pregnancy discrimination contacted the referral service in 2007. They were referred to attorneys Scott Lucas and Steven Sack, both based in Manhattan.

Eight years later, after a month-long trial in *Santana v. G.E.B. Medical Management*, 305261-08, a Bronx jury on Tuesday awarded \$4.5 million in compensatory damages to the trio, \$1.5 million in punitive damages and \$181,000 in lost wages.

G.E.B. Medical Management, a company offering office space and administrative support to physicians, plans to appeal the verdict.

Bronx Supreme Court [Justice Alison Tuitt](#) presided over the trial.

In a statement, Lucas, lead trial counsel for the plaintiffs, said the verdict "sends a message to all employers that they can't harass and fire women for being pregnant."

Lucas and Sack have taken other cases from the New York City Bar's legal referral service. They teamed up on [Samiento v. World Yacht](#), 10 NY3d 70, which resulted in a 2008 ruling from the state Court of Appeals.

That case was brought by restaurant servers over entitlement to "service charges" put on bills for banquets aboard the luxury craft. The court ruled that "reasonable patrons" would believe the money was intended for the wait staff.

Last year, the city bar service referred more than 18,000 potential clients to attorneys within its panels.

Laurie Morrison of Manhattan and John Luke, Jr., of counsel at Derek T. Smith Law Group, represented the defendants in the *Santana* case.
