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YRMC, pediatricians settle suit in child's death

By **TONY CARROLL**
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Yuma Regional Medical Center and two pediatricians have settled a lawsuit filed by the mother of a 3-year-old Yuma boy who died in Phoenix last year, his mother's attorney says.

"Our contention was that Harley Perez was untreated" for encephalitis, said Tucson attorney Silas Shultz, who represented the child's mother, Maria. The boy arrived at Phoenix Children's Hospital on the morning of March 1, 1996, "in extremis, basically, the end," Shultz

explained. "He died in the afternoon."

YRMC spokeswoman Machele Headington said the hospital's attorney advised her that she could not comment on the matter because the paperwork hasn't been finalized. But she did say the hospital staff has "a deep compassion for the loss experienced by the Perez family."

"YRMC is committed to providing high quality medical care to our patients and families," she said.

Shultz, who handled the case with Mike Rollins, said the dollar amount of the settlement will remain confidential according to the agreement. Shultz and Rollins were referred to Mrs. Perez

by Yuma's Bowman & Smith law firm.

Harley Perez died of a swelling and bleeding of the brain caused by encephalitis, Shultz said. He explained that the child's mother took him to the YRMC emergency room twice on Feb. 28, 1996. The child stayed at the hospital through Feb. 29 and the morning of March 1, when he had a seizure early in the morning before he was ultimately flown to Phoenix.

The emergency room doctors were named in the original suit but dismissed in the sealed settlement, Shultz said. In addition to YRMC, the settlement included pediatricians Dr. Patti Perry and Dr. Suffuden Tahir.