

MICHAEL J. O'CONNOR & ASSOCIATES NAMED TO LIST OF BEST PLACES TO WORK IN PENNSYLVANIA 2013

It is with great pride that we announce that Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, LLC has been named as one of the Best Places to Work in Pennsylvania for 2013.

The awards program was designed to identify, recognize, and honor the best places of employment in Pennsylvania. Employers are categorized based upon the total number of employees they have in the United States, 25 to 249 employees and 250 or more employees.



Companies from across the state entered the two-part process to determine the 100 Best Places to Work in PA. Michael J. O'Connor & Associates was recognized at the Best Places to Work in PA awards banquet, which was held on December 5 at the Lancaster County Convention Center in Lancaster.



The awards program, created in 2000, is one of the first state-wide programs of its kind in the country. The program is a public/private partnership between Team Pennsylvania Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Pennsylvania State Council of the Society for Human Resource Management, and the *Central Penn Business Journal*.

MICHAEL J. O'CONNOR & ASSOCIATES WELCOME BACK THE HONORABLE GERALD J. MULLERY ON STAFF

PRACTICE AREAS:

- Workers' Compensation
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Social Security Disability
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Personal Injury
- Nursing Home Neglect
- Slip & Fall Accidents
- Mesothelioma
- Tractor Trailer Accidents
- Wills, Estates & Elder Law
- Product Liability
- Dangerous Drugs
- Birth Injuries
- Wage & Hour Violations

Do you have a case?

1-800-518-4LAW

The attorneys and staff of Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, LLC are proud to welcome back the Honorable Gerald J. Mullery to our legal team.

Attorney Mullery handles cases involving workers' compensation, personal injury, auto accidents, premises liability, and tractor trailer accidents. He previously worked for Michael J. O'Connor & Associates from August 1998 until May 2002.

Attorney Mullery is admitted to practice in all Pennsylvania courts, the United States District Court and the United States Supreme Court. He is a graduate of Duquesne University School of Law.

In addition to being a member of our staff, Attorney Mullery is also a Representative in Pennsylvania's General Assembly representing the citizens of the 119th Legislative District. The 119th Legislative District currently includes the city of Nanticoke, the boroughs of Edwardsville, Larksville, Laurel Run, Plymouth, Sugar Notch and Warrior Run, and the townships of Bear Creek, Fairview, Hanover, Newport, Plymouth, Rice, Slocum, and Wright.

Attorney Mullery is from Nanticoke, Pennsylvania where he resides with his wife and four children.

The attorney team at Michael J. O'Connor & Associates has established a strong record of success. With a combination of integrity, reliability and trustworthiness, they have earned a reputation for the resolution of serious legal problems.



Are Nursing Facilities Giving Our Loved Ones Unnecessary Antipsychotic Medications?

By Personal Injury Attorney David A. Miller

More than half of nursing facility residents have some form of dementia, many of whom experience behavioral and psychological symptoms associated with dementia. These behaviors, which can pose significant challenges for the staff and residents, are often best treated with non-pharmacologic measures such as environmental modifications.

Over 25% of patients in nursing facilities in the United States receive antipsychotic medications, according to data from the Certification and Survey Provider Enhanced Reporting (CASPER) data network from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). While these drugs have legitimate uses, they are often used inappropriately in nursing facilities to treat symptoms associated with dementia, and evidence documenting their clinical efficacy for treating these symptoms is variable.

In July 2012, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services issued a report, "Nursing Facility Assessments and Care Plans for Residents Receiving Atypical Antipsychotic Drugs." The OIG found that 99% of records did not contain evidence of compliance with Federal requirements for care plan development. The OIG recommended, and CMS agreed, that CMS should improve the detection of noncompliance with Federal requirements for resident assessments and care plans for residents receiving antipsychotic drugs. Nursing facility staff are required to assess each resident's functional capacity upon admission to the facility and periodically thereafter. Staff must specify in a written care plan, based on these assessments, the services that each resident needs. Care plans should describe the services that the nursing facility will provide to residents to assist them in attaining or maintaining the highest practical functional status. Given that non-compliance is so prevalent, we certainly hope that CMS will make good on their agreement to hold accountable the nursing facilities that are not meeting Federal requirements in this area.

Progress Is Being Made

In March 2012, CMS announced an initiative to improve behavioral health management and to safeguard nursing home residents from unnecessary antipsychotic drug use. A goal was established to reduce antipsychotic drug use by 15% by December 2012. Federal figures show that 11 states have reached the target, while many other states are making progress. "This important partnership to improve dementia care in nursing homes is yielding results," said Patrick Conway, M.D., CMS chief medical officer and director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality. We expect Dr. Conway and CMS to ensure that all states meet the 15% goal and that a new goal for an even greater reduction in antipsychotic drug use will be created. The ultimate goal is a zero tolerance for unnecessary antipsychotic drug use for residents with dementia in nursing facilities.



THE MICHAEL J. O'CONNOR & ASSOCIATES HOLIDAY GIVEAWAY

Do you want to win a **FREE 7"** Google Android 4.1 Tablet?
Like the Michael J. O'Connor & Associates Facebook page or follow us on Twitter for a chance to win the Google Android Tablet. If you have already liked us and/or follow us, simply send an email to Steven Yurkonis (syurkonis@oconnorlaw.com) to be entered to win. You can also enter by calling our office and providing your name and telephone number to Steven.

The last day to enter is January 31, 2014.



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Personal Injury Attorneys David A. Miller and Dominique V. Ramer ran in the Philadelphia Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon, which was held on September 15, 2013. The Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon draws thousands of people to the City of Brotherly Love to participate in the 13.1 mile race, listen to live entertainment that lines the race course, visit the weekend-long Health & Fitness Expo and support family members and friends. Attorney Miller finished the race in 1:53:12 and Attorney Ramer finished the race in 1:48:07.

5 Foods You Should Eat This Winter to Stay Healthy

According to the Cleveland Clinic (my.clevelandclinic.org), 5 foods you should eat this winter to help stay healthy are:

- *Root Vegetables*, such as carrots, turnips and other roots.
- *Oatmeal*, which can help keep your immune system alert due to the high amount of zinc and help maintain a healthy heart due to soluble fiber.
- *Soup*, so long as you deviate away from salt, cream and beef. Vegetable broth, chicken broth and water are ingredients you want to look for when picking soups.
- *Broccoli and cauliflower*, both are high in Vitamin C, which is an immune system enhancer. Whether it be fresh or frozen, both forms of the vegetables are equally as nutritious.
- *Spicy tuna roll*, with tuna or salmon can be a great source of Vitamin D. A lack of Vitamin D can lead to heart disease, bone weakening and can be harmful to growth.

Attorneys and Staff at Michael J. O'Connor & Associates Raise Money for Hillside SPCA and Schuylkill County HeartChase

All summer long the attorneys and staff at Michael J. O'Connor & Associates participated in a fundraiser our office originated called 'Flip Flop Fridays.' Participants could make a monetary donation every Friday in order to wear flip flops or sandals to work for the day. This was the first year the office ran 'Flip Flop Fridays.' The MJOC team's efforts enabled two organizations to receive donations at the end of the summer, the Hillside SPCA and Schuylkill County HeartChase.

On Friday, October 4, 2013, Attorney Valeen Hykes presented the donations to Tarah Dove, Executive Co-Chair for Schuylkill County HeartChase and Jan Choplick, Humane Police Officer at the Hillside SPCA.



The MJOC team did not waste any time kicking off their next in-house fundraiser. The attorneys and staff immediately started taking donations for 'Toys for Tots' in order to participate in 'Sports Fanatic Fridays.' This fundraiser started in September and ran until the beginning of December. Attorneys and staff supported their favorite sports teams one Friday a month, by wearing their team's jerseys, t-shirts, etc., to support an amazing cause.

A 'Toys for Tots' drop-off box was located in the Frackville office for anyone who was interested in helping the MJOC team. Hopefully the team's efforts made someone's holiday season a little more merrier this year.





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608 West Oak Street
Frackville, PA 17931

Phone: 570-874-3300

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4529

Español: 1-888-882-4444

Fax: 570-874-4822

We appreciate your referrals!

For your convenience, Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, LLC has 14 satellite office locations across Pennsylvania, in addition to our main office in Schuylkill County. Call today to set up an appointment at one of our office locations, closest to you:

ALLENTOWN

PITTSBURGH

BALA CYNWYD

READING

DANVILLE

SCRANTON

HAZLETON

STROUDSBURG

LANCASTER

SUNBURY

LOCK HAVEN

WILKES-BARRE

PHILADELPHIA

WILLIAMSPORT

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