



## Trucking Tragedy: Clarifying Injuries, Care Needs, and Client Exposure

The trucking industry continues to face high-severity litigation, particularly when catastrophic collisions result in injury claims and long-term care projections. In these cases, defense teams rely heavily on credible, independent medical experts who can clarify causation, evaluate the validity of life care plans, and provide evidence-based opinions on the long-term implications of claimed injuries.

At IMS Legal Strategies, our Medical Expert Witness Services division has supported more than 21,000 injury-related matters across the US. The following example demonstrates how we partnered with defense counsel on a highly sensitive, high-exposure trucking case involving both fatality and severe traumatic injuries. Through coordinated expert analysis and professional case management, IMS helped our client position the matter for an informed and impartial resolution.

### The Case Challenge

A regional trucking carrier faced a wrongful death and personal injury lawsuit following a collision involving an 18-wheeler and another vehicle on a slippery road, due to rain and recent construction. The accident resulted in the death of a mother and caused significant injuries to her teenage son, who survived with multiple orthopedic injuries and a reported head trauma.

The plaintiff's legal team submitted extensive medical documentation along with a comprehensive life care plan for the teenager, projecting substantial long-term costs for cognitive, orthopedic, and rehabilitative needs. The defense team faced several challenges:

- **Reviewing the plaintiff's life care plan** for consistency with documented medical findings and accepted clinical standards.

- **Assessing the long-term implications** of the reported traumatic brain injury based on available records.
- **Evaluating the extent and potential permanency** of orthopedic injuries using operative reports and imaging.
- **Determining if projected rehabilitation needs were supported** by the plaintiff's documented recovery trajectory.

Given the severity of the crash and the emotional weight of the case, the defense team also required highly specialized experts who could provide independent, evidence-based opinions grounded in medical science.

## The Expert Solution

IMS provided defense counsel with rapid access to three board-certified experts from our carefully recruited and pre-vetted medical expert witness panel. Our client selected each for their clinical depth, forensic experience, and ability to address the specific components of the plaintiff's claims.

### Neuropsychology Expert

A board-certified clinical neuropsychologist brought practical expertise in assessing traumatic brain injuries in transportation cases. This expert conducted an independent review of the crash report, emergency medical services (EMS) documentation, and thousands of pages of hospital and rehabilitation records to evaluate the plaintiff's head injury and the cognitive-related components of the life care plan.

Based solely on the documented medical facts, the neuropsychologist offered clinically grounded opinions by:

- **Assessing the nature and severity of the traumatic brain injury** and determining whether the reported symptoms were consistent with the medical record.
- **Evaluating evidence of ongoing neurocognitive impairment**, using documented recovery patterns and available clinical data.
- **Reviewing the cognitive-related elements of the life care plan** to determine whether the projected services were medically supported.
- **Providing a causation analysis** rooted in established neuropsychological principles and the plaintiff's documented course of treatment.

These findings helped clarify the plaintiff's cognitive prognosis and ensured that long-term projections were evaluated against established clinical standards.

## Orthopedic Surgery Expert

The second expert witness, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon, specialized in lower extremity trauma. They performed an independent review of the plaintiff's orthopedic records, including operative reports, imaging studies, rehabilitation documentation, and follow-up evaluations spanning the full course of treatment.

The orthopedic expert provided clear, independent medical opinions by:

- **Evaluating the initial fracture management**, including the initial procedure and subsequent inpatient orthopedic care.
- **Reviewing the progression of lower extremity issues**, as documented through imaging and clinical examinations.
- **Assessing the indications and outcomes** of the following reconstructive surgery, including post-operative recovery and functional status.
- **Analyzing alignment and structural considerations**, noting where available imaging allowed for definitive conclusions and where it did not.
- **Reviewing orthopedic components of the life care plan** to determine which projected treatments were medically supported and which were inconsistent with documented findings.
- **Identifying reasonable future orthopedic needs**, such as potential hardware removal, based on accepted clinical standards.

These orthopedic findings helped establish a clear understanding of the plaintiff's long-term musculoskeletal prognosis and ensured that future care projections were evaluated against the documented course of treatment.

## Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) Expert

The client also engaged a board-certified physiatrist proficient in traumatic brain injuries and rehabilitation planning. This expert conducted a comprehensive review of the plaintiff's medical records, rehabilitation history, and life care plan to evaluate the accuracy of projected long-term needs and functional outcomes.

Drawing on decades of clinical experience in inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, they gave evidence-based opinions by:

- **Analyzing the plaintiff's recovery trajectory**, including improvements in mobility, self-care, and cognitive function.
- **Evaluating the necessity and frequency of future therapies**, considering documented progress and the likelihood of continued improvement over time.

- **Assessing the medical validity of projected residential care**, such as providing clinical evidence indicating potential for home-based management with appropriate supervision.
- **Identifying realistic follow-up needs**, including outpatient therapy, school-based accommodations, and periodic evaluations by PM&R, neurology, neuropsychology, orthopedics, and psychiatry.
- **Highlighting opportunities for community-based support programs** as alternatives to costly institutional care.
- **Providing insight into long-term prognosis**, such as the likelihood of improvement in a five-year period.

These findings helped defense counsel determine projections for lifelong residential care and the frequency of therapy.

In addition to the records review, IMS coordinated an in-person independent medical examination conducted by the PM&R expert. This evaluation confirmed the severity of the plaintiff's traumatic brain injury and orthopedic history while documenting significant functional improvements since the initial hospitalization.

The expert's report contained an independent analysis of the plaintiff's ability to perform basic self-care with supervision, his cognitive deficits and short-term memory challenges, and his mobility. It also included recommendations for ongoing outpatient therapy, school-based accommodations, and vocational rehabilitation services as opposed to long-term residential care.

## The Outcome

This case concluded with a confidential settlement. The defense team credited the medical experts' analyses as instrumental in avoiding unnecessary financial exposure and a protracted trial.

## Trust IMS When Litigation Stakes Are High

IMS Legal Strategies has vast experience supporting trucking defense clients with the medical expertise needed to navigate catastrophic injury claims. Our medical expert witness network has top-tier, board-certified specialists in more than 220 areas of clinical focus, including neuropsychology, orthopedic surgery, PM&R, pain management, and life care planning rebuttals.

Whether your case requires a medical records review, causation analysis, independent medical examination, or a life care plan rebuttal, IMS delivers the trusted expert opinions and engagement support necessary to strengthen your defense.

**IMS knows the subject matter authorities across every industry and discipline.** No matter your specific needs, IMS will locate and deliver the [best-aligned expert witness](#).

**Let's find your expert:** [contactus@imslegal.com](mailto:contactus@imslegal.com)

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