

O.C. Woman Awarded \$500K In Hospital Assault

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An Orange County woman who claimed a nurse sexually assaulted her has been awarded a half-million dollars.

A jury made the award Friday to 58-year-old Gretchen Loudon of Lake Forest.

Loudon says Romeo Le Poblete assaulted her in 2004 while she was recovering from an appendectomy at Saddleback Memorial Center in Laguna Hills.

He's believed to have fled to the Philippines and there's a warrant for his arrest.

Meanwhile, Loudon sued the nurse, the hospital and another medical center.

The jury yesterday put part of the blame on Saint Joseph Hospital in Orange, where Poblete used to work.

Jurors said the hospital should have notified Saddleback that two of its patients had complained Poblete improperly touched them.