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County hopes to settle lawsuit over beaten jail inmate

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Sedgwick County hopes to settle a lawsuit involving a mentally ill jail inmate who suffered a beating by a deputy in 2008 that put him in intensive care for weeks.

Commissioners voted after an executive session Wednesday to make an offer in the case. They did not disclose how much money the county would offer to settle the lawsuit, filed in federal court by a survivor of the inmate, Edgar Richard Jr.

Richard recently died of stomach cancer.

The lawsuit accuses Sedgwick County and the Sheriff's Office of negligence and alleges that they knew of a "de facto policy" of excessive force at the jail. The lawsuit recently was amended to include Conmed, which provides health care services at the jail, and Conmed employees.

The county has denied the allegations.

In April 2009, Manuel Diaz, a former Sedgwick County detention deputy, pleaded no contest to aggravated battery in the case.

Larry Wall, the lawyer for Richard's survivor, said he was unaware of any settlement offer but looked forward to receiving and evaluating it.

"We believe the mentally ill and mentally retarded are mistreated and denied access to treatment under such circumstances," Wall said.