**Snyder-Hill v. The Ohio State University**  
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**Case Synopsis:**

Ten former students brought a Title IX action against The Ohio State University for deliberate indifference and hostile environment. The plaintiffs alleged OSU knew that Dr. Strauss, former athletic team doctor, Student Health Services physician, and assistant medical professor, was sexually abusing and harassing student-athletes and other students during his 20-year tenure at the university. Plaintiffs further alleged OSU facilitated and supported Dr. Strauss’ actions by requiring athletes to see Dr. Strauss for required annual physicals.

Plaintiffs reported Dr. Strauss inappropriately touched and fondled their genitals during examinations, digitally penetrated their rectums, touched their bodies in other inappropriate ways, moaned during examinations, made sexualized comments and asked inappropriate sexual questions, and found reasons to examine their genitals even when the scope of their visit did not require such examination (example: an appointment for an ankle injury). Plaintiffs also alleged Dr. Strauss completed rectal examinations when not medically necessary. Administrators, coaches, and Athletic Directors are alleged to have known about the abuse but failed to take corrective action leading to more victimization over the course of two decades. As an example, after a student complained about Dr. Strauss’ inappropriate comments and touching during an examination to OSU personnel, the Director of Student Health reportedly informed the student that no one had lodged a complaint about Dr. Strauss previously and that Dr. Strauss confirmed the examination was medically necessary.

The lawsuit was filed in the Southern District of Ohio on July 26, 2018. Plaintiffs are seeking compensatory damages, pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, attorneys’ fees and court costs, and other relief that the court deems proper.

**Bullet Points:**

- Title IX practitioners should watch this case because of the historical nature of the underlying misconduct (the reported abuse occurred between 1978 and 1998), as well as the allegations of pervasiveness.
- Many plaintiffs were unable to identify what happened to them as sexual assault until reports came out in 2018.
- The plaintiffs allege there could be thousands of victims given Dr. Strauss’ 20-year tenure at OSU, as well as his prominent roles as an OSU Student Health Services physician and athletic teams doctor.
• Plaintiffs alleged that coaches and other professional staff members knew that Dr. Strauss was committing the abuse and that students regularly called him nicknames such as Dr. Balls, Dr. Nuts, Dr. Jelly Paws, and Dr. Cough.
• Dr. Strauss committed suicide in 2005.
• As evidence of an ongoing culture of abuse, Plaintiffs referenced:
  o OSU’s decision to close its sexual assault prevention and response unit.
  o How OSU instructed students to see Dr. Strauss for exams after they had reported complaints of misconduct by Dr. Strauss.
  o OSU’s pattern of permitting other sexual predators within the campus community.