Steve Plunkett

SENIOR COUNSEL

splunkett@bassford.com

T | 612.376.1635

F | 612.746.1235

Practice Groups

Professional Liability

Overview

Steve Plunkett concentrates his practice in health care and sexual misconduct defense, bringing more than 35 years of experience to his role as litigator and counsel.

Steve has defended health care and other clients in hundreds of cases involving bodily injury or the death of residents in group homes and assisted living or skilled nursing facilities. Steve and his health care team have obtained defense verdicts in significant pressure wound injury cases. Steve also represents corporations sued for their employees' sexual misconduct. Recently, he obtained a favorable resolution of several high-profile cases involving former high school students' sexual abuse claims.

Steve has served as a National Director to the DRI's Board of Directors. He recently served as Chair of its Law Institute, where he oversaw national seminars on health care law topics including long-term care, medical liability, and other related topics. Steve recently received DRI's Distinguished Achievement Award in recognition of his exceptional service, leadership, and long-standing contributions to the Medical Liability and Health Care Law Committee and its education programs.

Steve has been a member of the firm's Compensation Committee and Strategic Planning Committee. He also serves as chair of Bassford Remele's Long-Term Care Practice Group.

Education & Admissions

Education

- University of Minnesota Law School, J.D., 1989
- University of Minnesota, B.A., Phi Beta Kappa, 1985

Bar Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin

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- Minnesota
- Wisconsin

Experience

Representative Cases

- Obtained jury defense verdict in a medical malpractice claim against employees of a residential care facility.
- *Does AB, XY, and YZ v. Shattuck-St. Mary's Sch.*, 101 Fed. R. Evid. Serv. (Callaghan) 783 (D. Minn. Oct. 5, 2016), successful resolution of former students' suits involving claims of sexual abuse against private boarding school.
- *Fiers v. La Crosse Cty.*, 132 F. Supp. 3d 1111 (W.D. Wis. 2015), dismissal granted against claim for alleged violations of a nursing facility patient's rights under FNHRA.
- *Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, Inc. v. Walk to Emmaus*, 801 N.W.2d 193 (Minn. Ct. App. 2011), affirmed defense verdict at trial involving duty of care claim.
- *Butts v. Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Soc'y*, 802 N.W.2d 839 (Minn. Ct. App. 2011), reversed trial court's voluntary dismissal and ordered summary judgment for defendants.
- *Dunham v. Roer*, 708 N.W.2d 552 (Minn. Ct. App. 2006), affirmed trial court's summary judgment regarding numerous personal injury claims.
- *Doe v. Lutheran High School of Greater Minneapolis*, 702 N.W. 2d 322 (Minn. Ct. App. 2005), affirmed trial court's summary judgment regarding MN Human Rights claims.
- *Carolina Cas. Ins. Co. v. Burbach*, 354 F.3d 929 (8th Cir. 2004), reversed trial court's grant of summary judgment.
- *Metge v. Central Neighborhood Improvement Ass'n*, 649 N.W.2d 488 (Minn. Ct. App. 2002), affirmed trial court's summary judgment for executive director on defamation and reversed summary judgment for executive director on tortuous interference claim.
- *Illinois Farmers Ins. Co. v. Eull*, 594 N.W.2d 559 (Minn. Ct. App. 1999).
- *Humenansky v. Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Minn.*, 958 F. Supp. 439 (D. Minn. 1997).
- *Wheeler v. John Deere Co.*, 986 F.2d 413 (10th Cir. 1993).
- *Dornfeld v. Oberg*, 491 N.W. 2d 297 (Minn. Ct. App. 1992).

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- *Conlin v. City of Eagan*, 482 N.W.2d 519 (Minn. Ct. App. 1992), affirming trial court's denial of summary judgment.
- *Stanek v. A.P.I, Inc.*, 474 N.W.2d 829 (Minn. Ct. App. 1991).
- Obtained defense jury verdict in skilled nursing facility pressure wound case.
- Obtained defense award finding no liability for defendants in alleged physical and sexual abuse of nursing home resident.
- Obtained decision affirming court's grant of summary judgment on premises case involving thrown football.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's dismissal under medical malpractice statute.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's summary judgment regarding co-employee exception to workers' compensation exclusivity rule.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's grant of summary judgment on slip and fall claim.
- Obtained decision affirming court's summary judgment for city in premises case.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's summary judgment for religious organization in premises case.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's order enforcing settlement in personal injury case.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's summary judgment in favor of university.
- Obtained decision reversing trial court's order on liability issue in personal injury case.
- Obtained decision affirming trial court's judgment against plaintiff.

Seminars

- *Electronic Monitoring*, presenter, 2025 Care Providers of Minnesota Convention, Minneapolis, MN, November 10, 2025
- Symposium Moderator/Chair, 2025 National Foundation for Judicial Excellence Symposium, Chicago, IL, July 11-12, 2025
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Cannabis Law Seminar, Washington, DC, May 15, 2019
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability and Health Care Law Seminar, Nashville, TN, March 20-22, 2019
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Marijuana Law Seminar, Chicago, IL, June 26-27, 2018
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability and Health Care Law Seminar, San Diego, CA, March 1-2, 2018

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- *Litigation & Risk Management Considerations in Senior Living & Social Services*, presenter, M3 Insurance, Minneapolis, MN, November 8, 2017
- *Section 1983 Litigation and Olmstead Defenses in Long Term Care*, presenter, M3 Annual Defense Strategies Symposium, Madison, WI, August 23, 2017
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Marijuana Law Seminar, Seattle, WA, June 22-23, 2017
- Seminar Moderator/Planner, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability and Health Care Law Seminar, Las Vegas, NV, March 2-3, 2017
- *Power of Apology*, presenter, University of Minnesota School of Nursing, Minneapolis, MN, April 23, 2015
- *Power of Apology*, presenter, Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville, MN, September 11, 2014
- *Power of Apology*, presenter, Minnesota Care of the Aging Conference, Minneapolis, MN, February 25, 2013
- *Medical Spa Litigation*, presenter, 2012 Medical Malpractice Conference, Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association, Hennepin County Bar Association and Minnesota Association for Justice, Minneapolis, MN, April 19, 2012
- *Medical Spas: The Next Wave of Litigation in a Rapidly Growing Field?* presenter, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability Seminar, New Orleans, LA, March 8-9, 2012
- *Power of Apology*, presenter, Minnesota Medical Directors Association Fall Conference, Bloomington, MN, October 22, 2009
- Committee Chair, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, Scottsdale, AZ, September 10-11, 2009
- Committee Chair, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability Seminar, Orlando, FL, March 11-13, 2009
- Committee Chair, Defense Research Institute Complex Medicine Seminar, San Diego, CA, November 13-14, 2008
- Committee Chair, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, Orlando, FL, September 4-5, 2008
- Seminar Moderator, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability Seminar, March 7-9, 2007
- *What Meetings Hosted by Corporate Health Providers Can Do for your Seminar Attendance*, presenter, Defense Research Institute Annual Meeting, October 11, 2006
- Seminar Moderator, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, September 7-8, 2006

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- Seminar Moderator, Defense Research Institute Medical Liability Seminar, March 1-3, 2006
- *Long-Term Care Panel*, moderator, ALF Health Care Seminar, November 11, 2005
- Seminar Chair, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, September 15-16, 2005 and September 9-10, 2004
- *Discovery Issues – Defense Perspective*, presenter, Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association Representing Injured Elders, April 16, 2004
- *Use of Technology at Trial*, presenter, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, September 18, 2003
- *Update on Legislative Initiatives affecting Long-Term Care*, presenter, Minnesota Institute of Legal Education Long Term Care in Crisis, April 1, 2003
- *Use of Experts*, presenter, Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association Fourth Annual Nursing Home Seminar, March 21, 2003
- *Successful Case Management from Investigation to Trial*, presenter, National Business Institute Nursing Home Malpractice in Minnesota, November 22, 2002
- *Trends in Nursing Home Litigation*, presenter, Defense Research Institute Nursing Home/ALF Litigation Seminar, September 12, 2002
- *Use of Experts*, presenter, Minnesota Institute of Legal Education Nursing Home Litigation, June 28, 2002
- *Defense Perspective on Discovery*, presenter, Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association Third Annual Nursing Home Seminar, February 22, 2002
- *Handling the Defense of Personal Injury Claims through Trial*, presenter, National Business Institute Trying the Automobile Injury Case, March 1, 2002
- *Nursing Home Liability*, presenter, Minnesota Health & Housing Alliance, July 31, 2001
- *11th Amendment Immunity*, presenter, Federal Bar Association, June 1, 2000
- *Laws Regulating Insurance Agents*, presenter, Prosource, October 29, 1999
- *Litigation Issues for Agents & Brokers*, presenter, Minnesota Institute of Legal Education Minnesota Law on Insurance Agents & Brokers, October 20, 1999
- *Agent and Brokers Liability*, presenter, Prosource, May 10, 1999
- Course Co-Chair, *Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association, Release Deskbook*, September 23, 1998
- *Settlement and Ethics*, presenter, National Business Institute Adjusting the Automobile Injury Claim, March 10, 1998

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- *Defense Planning, Settlement Methods, Ethical Considerations, Trial, and Post-Trial Motions*, presenter, National Business Institute Trying the Automobile Injury Case, February 15, 1995
- *CGL Issues and Answers*, presenter, Prosource, October 12, 1993 and September 17, 1993

Professional & Civic

Bar Associations

- Minnesota State Bar Association
- State Bar of Wisconsin
- Hennepin County Bar Association

Professional Associations

- DRI
  - Distinguished Achievement Award, 2026
  - Thomas Segalla Excellence in Education Award, 2021
  - Board of Directors, 2021-2024
  - Law Institute
    - Chair, 2018-2020
    - Vice Chair, 2016-2018
    - Member, 2008-2021
  - 2019 Annual Meeting Planning Committee, Chair
  - Medical Liability and Health Care Law Committee Chair, 2007-2008
  - Long-Term Care Subcommittee of the Medical Liability and Health Care Law Committee Chair, 2005-2007
- Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association

Accolades

Honors & Awards

- DRI, Thomas Segalla Excellence in Education Award, 2021; Distinguished Achievement Award, 2026
- *Best Lawyers*, Minneapolis Professional Malpractice Law-Defendants Lawyer of the Year, 2021, 2023 and 2026
- *The Best Lawyers in America*©, Personal Injury Litigation-Defendants, 2018-present; Professional Malpractice Law-Defendants, 2019-present

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- Top Lawyers list, Professional Malpractice Law and Health Care Law, *Minnesota Monthly*, 2022 and 2023
- Rated AV Preeminent® by Martindale-Hubbell®
- Minnesota Super Lawyers list, *Super Lawyers*, 2007-present
- Minnesota Super Lawyers Top 100 list, *Super Lawyers*, 2009