

4/20/2003

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide support testimony for HB 73; the Dave and Angie Patient and Health Provider Protection Act.

My brother Chris Breinich was a father of 4 children. He worked tirelessly as a nurse to help others. He started his career after serving in the United States Army at his alma mater, The Ohio State University Hospital. He then worked at the Marion Correctional Facility for many years. He also worked at a prison in Charlotte NC for a while. Nursing in a prison is thankless and incredibly hard work. He also spent some time as a middle school nurse. His last job was working for Central Star Home Health Services, where he was able to really get to know his patients and they loved him. He was 52 years young when his life was taken.

In March of 2021 he went to the Galion Community Hospital after getting COVID and got an antibiotic after being diagnosed with multi-focal pneumonia and sent home. A week later he was back at the Galion hospital in distress. He had been prescribed Hydroxychloroquine by a doctor and had taken only 2 doses thus far, but the hospital would not allow him to continue taking this FDA approved, prescribed medication. They said it was not part of their COVID protocol. They gave him Remdesivir and a week later he was talked into being put on a ventilator for "ease of transport/comfort, while going to another hospital" is what they told him. On the day he was put on a ventilator, he was texting his wife to get him out or he was gonna die, saying to get home meds, bipap, oxygen concentration. He said their killing me, I gotta get this fluid off (screenshot attached). Chris's family was not allowed to see him at all during this time. He was denied a patient advocate. Once he was at Riverside Hospital, Chris was allowed limited visitation (2 hours per day) by his wife because the COVID quarantine period was over. He was still vented and on a bed that could rotate him to the prone position. Other than this, there was no treatment given.

Less than a week later he was transferred to Cincinnati Medical Center and put on a dialysis and ECMO machines. We could only visit for 2 hours every other day. I asked for Ivermectin at Cincinnati and they said No, they don't use that medication and it would not be approved. They were not treating him, only keeping him alive with the ventilator, ECMO, and dialysis. I spoke with Chris on April 2nd. They had reduced the paralytics a bit and I was able to talk to him, and get blinks, head nods, and hand squeezes. That was the last time anyone was able to communicate with him. I had to DEMAND that they check his Vitamin D, they said they just don't do this type of thing. His level was 9.2 when it should be 30-100. Therefore, now they had to treat it. This was the only treatment besides and antibiotic for an eye infection, and albuterol that he received. No nutrition whatsoever. He ended up getting a pulmonary bleed due to the ECMO and blood thinners. They told us his lungs were irreparably damaged. April 26th 2021, we had to let him go. He was surrounded by his wife, children, and sister, with many others there "in spirit", when we shut the machines off. It was the worst thing I have ever experienced in my life but I am grateful that I was able to be there. I realize that many denied that option and would have given anything for it.

It is hard to believe that even a health provider who should have the best access to prescribing doctors was not allowed to receive the treatment he desperately wanted and needed. When doctors and pharmacists fear retribution then patients are denied potentially life-saving treatments as a result. Ohioans need the ability to access any legal, FDA approved medication for any future pandemic, seasonal infection or other illness that may require a treatment that is not traditionally used for that purpose. If HB73 had been law when my brother was hospitalized, then I might still have him here today. A yes vote from the committee will not bring my brother back, but it will ensure that someone else's loved one will have a chance to access whatever medication could save their life. Please vote Yes on HB 73. Thank you.

Heather Falzone

Image of the last text he sent, and an image of my brother Chris.

