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House Dist: 74

Witness Testimony HB 236

On December 1st, 2020, I went into Wilson Health in Sidney, Ohio for a bariatric surgery. Prior to surgery my rapid Covid test was negative. The surgery was performed and I woke up five hours later with discomfort , but everything seemed normal. The next day, I passed the swallow test but could not meet the water intake requirement to be discharged yet. In the middle of that night, I had a coughing fit and aspirated fluid into my lungs. I was rushed into emergency surgery where the surgeon had to clean bile and other stomach contents that had overflowed. I was placed on a ventilator.

The surgery was successful but after a few days of my oxygen levels still being low, my wife asked a doctor friend of ours for advice and he recommended I test for Covid again. It came back positive. Wilson Health didn't have a dedicated ICU doctor, so my wife transferred me to Kettering Medical Center. Even though my wife knew there a no visitor policy, she felt Kettering would do a better job getting me back to normal.

Because I was Covid positive they put me on Remdesivir and a couple other drugs and my fever spiked to 105 and it induced liver and kidney failure. Thankfully a nurse practitioner my SIL knew told my wife to demand they take me off those meds. They did it with protest and then had me do dialysis. My fever dropped and I improved some.

I remained sedated on the ventilator and when I awoke in the beginning of January, I could not see nor move. My glasses weren't there, and my legs and arms weren't working. I was scared and alone. I would see a nurse or a doctor every once in a while, but I was too confused to understand what was going on and was having trouble discerning what was real and what wasn't . I had a tube down my throat and tubes coming out of my body. No one explained what was happening to me. I would go in and out of consciousness due to pain medications, so I could not tell the time, date, day, night, etc and there was no one to re-orient me.

As time went on, my wife was finally able to bring my glasses so I could see, and she was allowed to visit for a just 1 hour. I was incredibly grateful for that fraction of time and was crushed to see her leave. I would break down when I knew she was going because I didn't know when I would see her again. At one point I was so desperate for human contact that I agreed to have the beard I wore for 17 years shaved- just so I could have someone with me for a little while. Occasionally the nurse would offer a FaceTime with my family but it was just a painful reminder that I could not touch or hold them.

I was transferred to a long term care facility in early February. It was part of the Kettering Health Network, the no visitor policy was still in effect. While there, my wife fought hard, and eventually was able to get once a week visits. There was a clock on my wall, so I could see the time, and I would count down the hours until the day came she could visit. I felt alive when she was there, but after she left I would break down and go into a deep depression until I could see her again. This went on for about a month. Once the visits started happening weekly, I felt myself, (and my wife agrees), vastly improve.

We both believe that not having family visits or having someone to advocate for me daily caused irreparable damage. I woke up with bed sores on my bottom and my head from lack of being turned, or my legs and arms not working because they were left in one position for so long. If my wife had been allowed to be there, I know she would have advocated for me and made sure that I was taken care of properly.

In conclusion, I spent 94 days in the hospital with 39 days being on the ventilator. While I am luckier than most who were in a similar situation, I left the hospital barely being able to sit up, couldn't walk, and couldn't move my right arm. It has been almost 3 years since my original surgery. I can only walk short distances with a rolling walker, and I still have tremor in my hands and legs. I haven't worked since November 2020. Even though I am making progress, I still have a long road ahead of me. The damage has profoundly changed how I am able to be a father to my 3 children and participate in the daily activities of a man in his early 40's.

While it was my decision to get the surgery, it was not my decision to be secluded and cut off from my family. I hope my testimony shines light on how this patients' rights policy can affect people long term. I hope that all of you

will vote Yes on HB 236 so that myself and patients across the state will never again have to suffer alone.
Thank you.

