

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide supportive testimony for HB 73, the Dave and Angie Patient and Health Provider Protection Act.

My sister, Angie, and her husband, Dave, became ill in September of 2021. They wanted to try outpatient treatments to address their symptoms at home because they feared discrimination in the hospital over their vaccination status, and because the treatments they wanted to try were not accessible to them through local physicians or pharmacies. Their symptoms continued to worsen at home. Finally, their children had no option but to bring them to Wooster Hospital for admission.

At the hospital, Dave and Angie continued to request alternate treatments to those included in the standard hospital protocol. They were denied. Dave reluctantly consented to an emergency-use hospital protocol medication with significant known risks because they refused all other options. His symptoms quickly worsened. The medicine caused increased problems with his lungs, so he was pushed into being ventilated and died two days later from lung damage.

After witnessing what her husband went through, Angie did not want to take the same path. Several days before Angie died, she called me for help from Wooster City Hospital at approximately 10:45 pm. She was mumbling that she needed help and wanted Budesonide because her oxygen was plummeting. She had read studies about it being successful for her condition. The doctor told her he was waiting until 11 pm to decide what to do about it. I immediately called the hospital to speak with Angie's nurse. The nurse I spoke with was cold and seemed uncaring. She said she would check with the doctor and get back with me. I ended up calling the nurse back to find out how soon the Budesonide could be administered with a doctor's order. The nurse claimed the hospital did not have access to Budesonide. I replied to her that I had called just 2 days prior to the in-house pharmacist and confirmed they had plenty of it in stock, in 2 different forms!

Angie and I continued to plead with the staff for Budesonide, and the nurse then stated that the medication "could not be given to a BIPAP patient." I later came to find out this was absolutely untrue. A team of doctors came in and bullied Angie and her daughter, continuing to insist that their antiviral protocol and ventilation were the ONLY options for Angie. Angie consented to the antiviral drug under duress, but she continued to refuse to consent to the ventilator.

Angie's daughter, Ariel, told us her mom was then denied hydration and nutrition because it was "not safe" for her to receive nutrition unless she was ventilated. Angie and her children continued to beg staff for IV and nutritional fluids via whatever means they could without being intubated. She was denied.

Ultimately, Angie's children had to painfully watch their mom succumb to the effects of dehydration, rather than the illness itself. Why is it okay to starve a patient to death to "protect" them from the possibility of aspiration? Why did my sister not have the right to decide what risks she was willing to take with her nutritional intake? Angie was punished to the point of death because she refused the interventions that the hospital "approved of" and was financially compensated for.

Ohioans should have the ability to access any legal, FDA-approved medicines for any future seasonal pandemic or other illness or infection that may require a treatment that is not traditionally used for that purpose. Patients, like my sister, should also have the right to make medical choices that differ from hospital protocol without fear of being starved to death because of it. What happened to Dave and Angie should never be allowed to happen to anyone in this state again! Our family is still suffering the horrific aftermath of their deaths, and we pray for justice for the precious lives we lost. This bill is too late to save my sister, Angie, and my brother-in-law, Dave, but if passed, it can protect your sister, your brother-in-law, mom, dad, your child, or grandchild, by securing them access to treatments that could save their lives in the future.

I urge the Committee to vote "Yes" on Ohio Bill 73!

Thank you,

Crystal Boles





