

My husband, Austin Lee Miles, was admitted to Baptist South Medical Center in Jacksonville, Florida, on July 21, 2021, after testing positive for COVID-19. He remained hospitalized until his death on August 4, 2021.

During his hospitalization, I was not permitted to visit him because of the hospital's COVID-19 visitation policy. I repeatedly asked to be allowed to see my husband while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, but I was not allowed to be at his bedside. After Austin died, I was permitted to enter the hospital and see him. I have never understood why I could not have been allowed to take the same precautions to be with him while he was still alive.

Throughout Austin's hospitalization, I repeatedly demanded that antibiotics be given because I was concerned about the possibility of a secondary bacterial infection. My requests were refused, and Austin did not receive the antibiotics I was requesting. When Austin later developed a fever, I specifically demanded that his blood be tested for a bacterial infection. Only after I made that request was I informed that blood cultures would be obtained. I have never been able to locate the blood culture results in the medical records I received.

I also requested that other medications be considered for Austin's treatment. Those requests were also denied. I believed additional treatment options should have been considered, but they were not provided.

One of Austin's pulmonologists told us that because he was unvaccinated, he could end up on a ventilator and die. Austin was eventually placed on a ventilator. Before his hospitalization, he told me that if he ever required a ventilator, he wanted me by his side. Because I was not allowed to visit, I could not be present for him or advocate for him during that critical time.

After obtaining Austin's medical records, I found documentation indicating that he attempted to remove the ventilator. The records also document medications administered for sedation while he was on the ventilator.

Several days before Austin died, I was notified that palliative care had been consulted. Despite that notification, I was never contacted by the palliative care team. I was therefore unable to discuss my husband's condition, his goals of care, or possible treatment options with them.

In my efforts to advocate for Austin, I communicated with one of the hospital chaplains, who agreed to help arrange a meeting with Austin's physicians to review his care. That meeting never occurred because Austin died before it could take place.

Since Austin's death, I have continued reviewing his medical records in an effort to better understand the care he received. I respectfully ask that investigators review the decisions made during his hospitalization, including the effect of visitation restrictions on family advocacy, the reasons my requests for additional treatment were denied, the circumstances surrounding the palliative care consultation, and the complete laboratory and blood culture results. My family has

lived with these unanswered questions for nearly five years, and I hope a thorough review will provide clarity and help improve patient care for future families.