

My name is Jocelyn Bates, only daughter of Diane and Joseph Bates. My mother, 74, was admitted to Morristown Medical Center September 6, 2021, and died September 10. My father, 73, was admitted September 8 after a fall and was COVID-positive; he died September 17. Married 51 years, they lived with me, my husband, and their three grandchildren.

COVID restrictions severely limited my ability to see or advocate for them. They often did not answer their phones. I sometimes called 3–4 times daily before a nurse returned my call and struggled to reach physicians.

My mother lived an extremely holistic life. I requested ivermectin, antibody treatment, and hydroxychloroquine and was denied. Both parents received remdesivir. My mother's records document acute kidney injury and elevated liver enzymes; one entry states, "Hold Remdesivir in setting of elevated LFTs," although her medication record shows remdesivir was administered.

My mother called me at least three times saying her whole body hurt. She was frightened and unsure what was being put into her body. Her record documents refusal of proning "due to discomfort," yet I later found repeated pain assessments stating "0 – No pain."

My parents were hospitalized only doors apart but kept separated except during my only visit. I was told my visit was an exception because both were hospitalized. My entire visit lasted approximately one hour. I found my mother cold, covered only by a thin sheet, with her feet and upper chest exposed.

My father was unexpectedly wheeled in wearing a soft cervical collar inside a clear isolation enclosure. The enclosure prevented him from standing and reaching his wife; he could not embrace her or kiss her hand goodbye. He was later wheeled back to his room.

Early September 10, a nurse documented that my mother "refused everything" and wanted no more medications. **I was never told this.** Later documentation states she requested discontinuation of "aggressive medical interventions" and was transitioned to comfort measures with morphine and Ativan. I was informed about comfort care and agreed based on the information given. Had I known she had refused everything and wanted no more medications, I would not have agreed.

Before the nursing shift changed, my father was wheeled back to his room and I was told to leave while my mother was still alive. I begged to stay and was told I should be grateful I had been allowed to visit and had been given enough time. Neither my father nor I was permitted to remain with her. I was already in my car when she died at approximately 11:46 a.m.

Her belongings, including her phone, disappeared. The hospital said the morgue had them; the morgue said the funeral home had them; the funeral home said they never arrived. They were never recovered.

Before my mother died, there was discussion of my father potentially returning home after physical therapy. On September 10, PT was deferred because his wife had "just expired in this

unit.” After my mother’s death, his oxygen requirements increased sharply and his condition deteriorated. I was not permitted to be with him and found no documentation of completed grief assessment or bereavement counseling.

He became confused and agitated. His record says “Monitor for confusion while on Levaquin,” then “stop levofloxacin due to agitation” and “Need restraint due to agitation.” He was placed in wrist restraints.

I asked staff to remove them. I was told the option given to have them removed was hospice/comfort care. **I did not ask for hospice; I asked for the restraints to be removed.** I agreed because I could not allow him to continue suffering in restraints. His record documents my September 13 request for comfort care and restraint removal.

My father died September 17, seven days after my mother.