

August 17, 2026

Dear Chairman Johnson and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Marie Shepherd. I am a 72-year-old widow of a COVID-19 hospital protocol victim.

My husband, Charles Shepherd, was 79 years old when I brought him to Honor Health Deer Valley Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona on January 6, 2022, for dehydration related to COVID-19

Upon admission, I was not allowed to be with him during evaluation. It was the last time I saw him alive. I spoke with the attending physician and requested that he be given monoclonal antibodies, and I was told that it didn't help COVID. I also insisted that my husband not be administered Remdesivir due to his pre-existing kidney issues. Despite this request, Remdesivir was administered for four days without my knowledge or consent. I was also repeatedly pressured by a physician to consent to the use of a ventilator. I declined and was subsequently berated.

During his stay, hospital staff informed me that my husband would likely die because he was unvaccinated and even if he didn't die, when he came home he'd only live for two weeks due to his unvaxed status. My husband remained in isolation for ten days, during which time no family members were permitted to visit him. I was supposed to receive a video call, but was later denied by staff. Phone calls from me and other family members were abruptly disconnected and when we attempted to reconnect, the phone was busy, as if it were off the hook. Staff was very angry when we called to speak with him. During this time, he was also administered dexamethasone, which resulted in slurred speech and cognitive confusion. I was told by a physician that he had dementia. I told the doctor emphatically that he did not have dementia and that these symptoms were due to side effects from dexamethasone. I insisted that they stop it immediately and shortly after, his cognitive issues greatly improved. During one of the calls, my husband reported to me that he had been without food and water for several days, necessitating me to call hospital management and insist that he needed to be given protein shakes and fluids. To this day, I don't know if this was done. Additionally, my daughter overheard a nurse yelling at my husband when he informed her that he was experiencing uncontrollable bleeding.

Approximately a week from admission, I was told that he did not have COVID and I should seek a rehab center so that he could transition home as he made great improvements. I requested he be moved to a room where we could visit, and it was denied. Even during this time, I nor any family members, were able to reach him by phone.

In the early morning hours on January 16, 2022 I received a call from a staff member telling me my husband had passed. While the hospital stated his heart had stopped due to a heart attack, the coroner's report (which I paid for out of pocket) indicated that his kidneys had failed and his lung had ruptured, causing him to bleed to death. I believe that Remdesivir, which was administered without my knowledge or informed consent, was a contributing factor. I ask the Senate to investigate the implementation and enforcement of COVID-19 hospital protocols,

including the financial incentives provided for COVID-19 diagnoses and deaths. I further request an investigation into the safety of Remdesivir and a review and reinstatement of the PREP Act to ensure accountability for patient mistreatment.