

Patient: Paula Jean Boaz

Date of Birth: January 25, 1942

Hospital: HonorHealth Sonoran Crossing Medical Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Admission Date: October 28, 2021

Date of Death: December 2, 2021

October 26–28, 2021

Approximately forty-eight hours before hospitalization, Paula became ill.

She had very little appetite and became increasingly weak.

While eating a taco, she aspirated food into her airway.

When emergency medical personnel arrived, Mike and Lisa specifically informed EMS that Paula had aspirated while eating and believed she had developed pneumonia as she had during previous aspiration events.

Paula was transported to HonorHealth Sonoran Crossing Medical Center on October 28, 2021.

COVID Isolation

Because Paula tested positive for COVID-19, visitation was severely restricted during the initial portion of her hospitalization.

This limited the family's ability to observe her condition and participate in discussions regarding her care.

During this period, the family later learned that Paula had been receiving Midazolam and morphine. The family became concerned that these medications caused significant sedation while Paula was experiencing respiratory illness.

The family requested that these medications not be administered.

Antiviral Medication

The family specifically requested that Paula not receive Remdesivir (Veklury) because of concerns they had regarding reports they had reviewed about the medication.

Hospital staff discussed antiviral treatment with the family.

The family later understood that Veklury, the brand name for Remdesivir, had been administered.

After Isolation Ended

Once family visitation resumed, Mike, Lisa, and other family members observed Paula on numerous occasions.

Their observations included:

- Paula was frequently alert and able to hold conversations.
- She often stated she was not experiencing significant pain.
- She frequently stated she felt she could breathe adequately.
- Oxygen tubing was repeatedly observed lying on the floor rather than being worn.

When questioned, Paula denied repeatedly removing the oxygen herself.

Hospital staff reported that Paula's oxygen levels were dangerously low despite increasing oxygen support.

As Paula's hospitalization continued, she became progressively weaker.

Hospital staff informed the family that because Paula required high levels of oxygen support, she was not strong enough to safely eat.

Paula's cardiologist reportedly stated that her heart remained strong and believed adequate nutrition was essential to her recovery.

The cardiologist requested placement of a feeding tube.

According to the family, that request was denied.

The family repeatedly expressed concern that prolonged lack of nutrition was causing Paula's physical decline.

Family Meetings with Hospital Administration

- Greater attention to treatment of aspiration pneumonia.
- Reconsideration of a feeding tube.
- Discontinuation of Midazolam and Morphine
- Earlier pulmonary involvement.
- Individualized treatment rather than reliance upon standardized COVID protocols.

As Paula became weaker, her oxygen requirements increased.

According to hospital staff, she eventually required CPAP because conventional oxygen therapy was no longer sufficient.

The family questioned whether Paula's inability to breathe independently had been significantly affected by prolonged lack of nutrition, continued sedation, and declining physical strength.

The family also questioned whether prolonged CPAP use or other aspects of her hospitalization contributed to later findings involving her lungs.

These questions remain unanswered.

Approximately five weeks after admission, a pulmonary specialist evaluated Paula.

The pulmonologist informed the family that Paula's lungs had extensive scarring and that she was unlikely to survive.

The family questioned why pulmonary consultation had not occurred much earlier during her hospitalization.

The family has not received an explanation establishing when the lung scarring developed or what specifically caused it.

Family members noticed a recurring pattern.

Early morning visits often found Paula heavily sedated and minimally responsive.

Later in the day, after spending time with family, Paula frequently became more alert, conversational, and interactive.

Ventilator Discussion

Near the end of Paula's hospitalization, the family received a nighttime telephone call informing them that Paula required mechanical ventilation or she would likely die.

The family immediately went to the hospital.

Before they arrived, Paula had passed away on December 2, 2021.