

My name is Paula Ennis. Paul J. Swenson was my father. He passed away on January 10, 2022. As I speak, I ask that you take a moment and place yourself in my shoes — or in my father's. Imagine, for a moment, how it would feel to walk where we have walked.

My father was a healthy 65-year-old man — still working, still giving, still fully present in the lives of the people he loved. He was devoted to his faith, his family, and his community. In hard moments, he would quietly remind us to pause and look up — to God, to something greater than ourselves. He entered Faribault Medical Center on December 29, 2021 needing short-term oxygen support.

He took no daily medications before that day. Twelve days later, he was gone. In those twelve days, we were not allowed to see him — not once, until he could no longer speak. Minnesota was among a very small minority of states that reimposed visitor restrictions that winter. While families elsewhere stood beside their loved ones and advocated for their care, we were reduced to fragmented phone calls while my father fought alone. Those restrictions were not a minor inconvenience. They were a barrier between a man fighting to get well and the family who could have helped him do that.

His vaccination status was documented in his chart with a frequency that went well beyond standard record-keeping. Staff made remarks about it from the moment of admission. We cannot prove what was in anyone's mind — but the pattern was there, and our family believes it had no place in decisions about his care.

Only after my father had been sedated and placed on a ventilator did the facility permit two visitors. Our family made the painful decision together that his wife and oldest daughter would make that drive. My younger sister and I stayed behind — not because we didn't want to be there, but because we were not allowed. He could no longer speak when they arrived. I have to ask this Committee: why only then? Why not before, when he was still conscious and could still tell us what was happening? Upon his transfer to Abbott Northwestern, a new team reviewed his chart and our family learned for the first time that he had been given a prostate medication — one with documented side effects of hypotension and increased breathing difficulty — while he was already fighting for every breath. We were never told. We were never asked. This is just one of many instances in which critical information about his care and medications was never communicated to his family.

After he passed, we found notes written in his own hand documenting little to no food — a single frozen orange juice cup. He became septic and we were not informed until it was too late. No physician met with our family when he died. No one explained why he turned so quickly. One moment I was making plans to return home to my husband and children. A few hours later, I was being called to the hospital to say goodbye forever.

I am not here to blame any one person. I am here because a system kept his family away, kept us uninformed, and left him alone in a crisis he should never have faced without us. That system

must change. My father always reminded us to look up. I am looking up right now — and I am asking this Committee to do the same. I submit this testimony so that what happened to Paul J. Swenson may never happen to you or anyone you love.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula G. Ennis | Daughter of Paul J. Swenson