

My name is Pressley C. Stutts III, and I'm here to tell you how hospital protocols in the summer of 2021 took my father from me.

In July 2021, my father, Pressley C. Stutts Jr., was admitted to Pelham Hospital in Simpsonville, South Carolina, with COVID-19. Within days of learning he was there, I traveled down to be his advocate and his agent. When I arrived, I was denied access to see him. Shortly after, I was banned from the hospital premises entirely. From that point on, the only way I could reach him was by phone, text, or FaceTime.

I did not stay silent. I brought evidence of the Frontline Doctors Protocol — an approach that had already shown success in treating COVID patients. I made repeated calls to doctors, hospital staff, and administrators asking them to implement that protocol, the one my father and I both wanted. Two attorneys worked with me and filed injunctions seeking to compel the hospital to follow those proven protocols. We also requested a transfer to a nearby hospital that was willing to provide the care we were seeking. That request was denied.

Instead, the hospital transferred him only after they had already placed him on a ventilator and into a medically induced coma. He was put on the ventilator on Friday, August 13, 2021 — within twelve hours of the plan we had in place to transport him to North Carolina for proper care. One week later, on August 19, he was gone.

I have the recordings of those conversations. I have his hospital records, the autopsy, and the death certificate. They document a sequence of decisions that shut out family advocacy, shut out the Frontline Doctors Protocol that was already being used successfully elsewhere, and left my father with no real chance once the ventilator and induced coma were imposed.

I am not a physician. I am a son who watched the system close ranks against the very interventions that might have saved his life. The protocols in place treated family members who questioned them as obstacles rather than partners. They treated evidence of better outcomes as irrelevant if it fell outside the approved plan. And in my father's case, that rigidity proved fatal.

Senator, this committee is examining hospital protocols during the COVID period. I ask you to look closely at what happened when families brought data, legal pressure, and urgent requests for transfer — and were still overridden. Look at the cost of a one-size-fits-all approach that left no room for individualized care or informed consent from the patient and his designated advocate.

My father, Pressley C. Stutts Jr., deserved the chance to fight with every available tool. He did not get that chance. I am here so that what happened to him is on the record, and so that no other family is left standing outside a hospital, banned from the bedside, while the clock runs out.

I can provide documentation of the hospital records and recorded phone calls.

Thank you for hearing & helping me.