

Statement of Sandra Brewer concerning the death of my husband, Richard

On Saturday, December 18, 2021, Rich had a headache and fever. By Monday, he began vomiting and having diarrhea. On Tuesday, his doctor prescribed Azithromycin, but when Rich tried to take the first dose, he vomited it back up. The vomiting and diarrhea continued until Thursday morning. He was severely dehydrated and exhausted, so he went to the emergency room.

Rich did not have cold symptoms, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing. Upon arrival, he was asked about his vaccine status, tested for Covid, placed on oxygen, and later told he was positive. After that, he was no longer allowed visitors or access to family.

We both requested the kind of care he had received in the past for similar symptoms: IV fluids, anti-nausea medication, and IV antibiotics. All antibiotic requests were refused. I also asked that he not be given Remdesivir. At first, Rich refused it, and that refusal is documented in his records.

On Friday morning, Rich called me at 6:00 a.m. He told me that he was denied bathroom privileges and given a bottle to urinate in. He had vomited again and asked more than once for a toothbrush, toothpaste, and mouthwash, but he was refused hygiene items, told to stay in bed and not leave the room. He told me he was not getting a “warm fuzzy” from the staff.

I told him to meet me at the front door but he said he could not just leave. I brought him clothes, toiletries, and a phone charger, but when I arrived, the front doors were locked. I left the bag with someone inside the hospital.

Later, I learned Rich had allowed them to start Remdesivir. When he called to tell me, I was devastated. Earlier in the day, his oxygen was increased, (even though he could blow the spirometer to the top) and he was started on breathing treatments. He called me every morning at 6:00 a.m. He did not struggle to breath or sound winded.

Saturday the hospital called and said they were moving Rich to critical care. He was placed on a BiPAP machine and turned prone. Sunday night they moved him to the ICU.

The next morning, it was suggested he go on a ventilator before it became an actual emergency. The hospital told me the same thing. We expected to video chat with him before intubation, but two hours later, I was told he had already been intubated and that it did not go well. According to the medical records, the wrong-sized blade was used during the first attempt, and they had to start the procedure over.

After placement of the ventilator, he was diagnosed with bacterial pneumonia and

started on an antibiotic, but by then his organs were shutting down. I was told his kidneys were shutting

down and they did not know why. Dialysis was attempted, but I was told the machine was not working.

The hospital told me that if I removed Rich from the ventilator and allow only comfort care, then he could have visitors. That meant his family could only come if I agreed to end life-sustaining treatment.

My husband was isolated from his family, denied basic care we requested, placed on medications & treatments I believe harmed him, placed on a ventilator, and died within one week of entering the hospital. He went in dehydrated and exhausted, without respiratory distress, and he never came home.

I am submitting this statement because Richard's life mattered.

He was my husband of 40 years, my best friend, the father of our children, and a PopPop who loved his family deeply. I want his story entered into the record so that what happened to him is not forgotten, and so that families like mine may finally receive answers and accountability.