

Senator Johnson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sharon Smith, and I am what many now call a **COVID Protocol Widow**.

On August 11, 2021, I lost my 61-year-old husband, Jeffrey R. Smith. Our two sons lost their father, our daughters-in-law a cherished father-in-law, and our four grandchildren their grandfather. Jeff and I were happily married for 42 years. He was my best friend and the love of my life. He took no prescription medications, walked 3-6 miles regularly, and just two months before becoming ill was told by our primary-care physician that he was in excellent health.

July 4, 2021— Jeff told me he felt fine and did not want medical care. I was concerned about his breathing and insisted we go to urgent care for a chest X-ray. He walked in without assistance. His temperature was 98.6°F and blood pressure 114/70. We were directed to the nearby ER for further evaluation. We expected treatment and to be sent home.

Instead, Jeff was admitted for oxygen and observation. His records document normal kidney function and bilateral pneumonia. I later learned from his medical records that remdesivir was started in the ER. I was not informed or asked to consent. After reviewing nearly 6,000 pages of records, I have been unable to locate a consent signed by Jeff or documentation that risks, benefits, and alternatives were discussed before treatment began. By the next day, he was transferred to the Covid ICU, but there was nothing to “worry about”

July 6, 2021 — Jeff’s nurse called me crying. She told me a Dr had informed Jeff that he would need to be placed on a ventilator or he would die. Yet Jeff was still communicating with me, family, friends, and coworkers.

During the next two weeks — I was separated from my husband and struggled to participate in his care as his wife and POA. I requested a care-plan meeting, our pastor visitation, and communication with our primary-care physician. These requests were **denied**. I asked about ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, vitamins, and ECMO. An attending physician told me these treatments would not be provided because they were **“not protocol.”** He was given a 10% chance of survival. Jeff lost **47 pounds in approximately 15 days**. I remained deeply troubled by what I believe was inadequate nutrition & hydration. When I requested basic hygiene care, clothing and bedding changed. Jeff told me, **“Sharon, don’t make waves, because they take it out on me.”**

July 18, 2021 — A CT angiogram confirmed a pulmonary embolism in Jeff’s right lower lung. He was placed on a heparin infusion for 12 hrs with signs of improvement, it was subsequently transitioned to Eliquis. I was never given a clear explanation for that change.

July 22, 2021 — At 10:00 p.m., I was told Jeff was doing well—relaxed, watching TV, 35 minutes later I was called, he was being placed on a ventilator after what was described to me as a panic attack. We were allowed a brief FaceTime call before intubation, we said, **“I love you.”** It was the last time I saw my husband conscious.

Jeff remained mechanically ventilated for 20 days, heavily sedated. His kidneys eventually failed and he required dialysis, despite having documented normal kidney function upon admission.

August 11, 2021 – The Dr called and told me Jeff would **“code out”** today. We rushed to the hospital. I was initially denied entry but insisted on seeing my husband. I was allowed two brief minutes to hold his hand and tell him I loved him for the last time. I was strongly pressured to agree to a DNR. When I refused, I was screamed at and belittled. Later that afternoon, Jeff died.

July 4–August 11, 2021 — After 42 years of marriage, I was left searching through nearly 6,000 pages of medical records trying to understand what happened to the man I loved.

Respectfully,

Sharon L Smith