

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide support testimony for HB 73, the Dave and Angie Patient and Health Provider Protection Act.

My sister Angie and her husband Dave became ill in September of 2021. They wanted to try outpatient treatments to address their symptoms at home because they feared discrimination in the hospital over their vaccination status. Because the treatments they wanted to try were not accessible to them through local physicians or pharmacies, their symptoms continued to worsen at home. Finally, their children had no option but to bring them to Wooster hospital for admittance.

At the hospital Dave & Angie continued to request alternate treatments to those included in the standard hospital protocol. They were denied. Dave reluctantly consented to a hospital protocol medication and his symptoms quickly worsened. He was pushed into being ventilated and died two days later from lung damage.

After Angie witnessed what her husband went through, she did not want to take the same path. Several days before Angie died, she called me for help from the Wooster City Hospital at approximately 10:45pm. She was mumbling that she needed help and wanted a particular nebulizer steroid drug because her oxygen was plummeting, and she had read studies about it being successful for her condition. The doctor told her he was waiting until 11 p.m., to decide what to do about it. I immediately called the hospital to speak with Angie's nurse. The nurse I spoke with was cold and seemed uncaring and she said she would check with the doctor and get back with me. I ended up calling the nurse back to find out how soon the nebulized medicine could be administered with a doctors order? The nurse claimed the hospital did not have access to this medicine. I replied to her that I had called just two days prior to the in-house pharmacist and confirmed they had plenty of it in stock in two different forms.

Angie and I continued to plead with staff for that breathing treatment and the nurse then stated that the medication "could not be given to a BIPAP patient". I later came to find out this was absolutely, untrue. A team of doctors came in and bullied Angie and her daughter, continuing to insist that their anti-viral protocol and ventilation was the ONLY option for Angie. Angie consented to the anti-viral drug under duress, but she continued to refuse to consent to the ventilator.

Angie's daughter, Ariel, told us her mom was then denied hydration and nutrition because of her refusal to be vented. The staff claimed they were justified in the denial because it was "not safe" for her to receive nutrition unless she was ventilated. Angie and her children continued to beg staff for IV and nutrition fluids via whatever means they could without being intubated. She was denied.

Ultimately, Angie's children had to painfully watched their mom succumb to effects of dehydration, rather than from the illness itself. Why is it ok to starve a patient to death to "protect" them from the possibility of aspiration? Why did my sister not have a right to decide what risks she was willing to take with her nutritional intake? Angie was punished, to the point of death, because she refused the interventions that the hospital "approved of."

Ohioans should have the ability to access any legal, FDA approved medicines for any future, seasonal pandemic, or other illness, or infection that may require a treatment that is not traditionally used for that purpose. Patients, like my sister, should also have the right to make medical choices that differ from hospital protocol without fear of being starved to death because of it. What happened to Dave and Angie should never be allowed to happen to anyone in this state again. Our family is still suffering the horrific aftermath of their deaths and we pray for justice for the precious lives we lost. This bill is too late to save my sister Angie and my brother-in-law, but if passed, it can protect your sister, brother-in-law, mom, dad, child, or grandchild, by securing them access to treatments that could save their lives in the future.

Please protect Ohio patients and the health providers that serve them, by voting yes on HB 73.

Thank you,

Crystal Boles

