

2/2/24

Proponent of SB 352

Written Testimony – unable to testify (live and work in Wichita, KS), By J. Buresh.

To: Chairwoman; Beverly Gossage, Committee Members; Renee Erickson, Pat Pettey, Molly Baumgardner, Mike Thompson, Cindy Holscher, Kristin O'Shea, Mark Steffen, Chase Blasi.

I learned of this bill protecting the rights of hospital and/nursing home visitation and for patient advocacy to not be revoked. I urge you to support and pass this bill. I am going to give you 3 personal examples of the grave injustice this imposed on my family and others.

1.) My Dad, A WWII veteran, was in the nursing home during covid. He began to deteriorate and not get out of bed or eat. None of us family members were allowed to visit him to find out what was going on. Then we got the call that it was only a matter of hours or a day or two. Mom had passed away 6 months prior to this, so it was already a hard time for the family. We were told only the grown children could visit once, for 5 minutes maximum and only 1 at a time. At the time I got to see Dad, he was unresponsive. After this 5 minute allowance I had to leave. Dad died alone. It literally broke our hearts.

Before he went downhill, we could not visit him at all. He was blind, deaf and had dementia. We tried talking to him through the window, but they put that darned mask on him which confused him, then tried to talk on a cell phone but he couldn't see us so it confused him. We really felt robbed of the last good days we could have spent with Dad. A man who carried wounds of war for our freedoms all his life (he was blown up in a fox hole in Sarbrucken Germany), was stripped of his freedom to have his children at his bedside at his hour of death. So evil and wrong.

2.) My brother became ill and had trouble breathing, drove himself to the ER then was transported to St. Francis in Wichita. Due to covid he was not allowed any visitors, including his own daughter, and no advocacy was allowed. I tried to talk on the phone with him, but he was struggling to breathe; they kept increasing his oxygen. We couldn't get a straight answer as to what was wrong with him. The doctors tried to put him on Resdemevir and he refused. One doctor got mad at him and slammed the door in his face. Then they wanted to put him on a vent. He also refused. They threatened him. They said if he did not accept the "covid protocols" then they would just discharge him on an oxygen tank and he would die. He said fine, and called me. We all knew the huge payouts they got for using the protocols.

He was going to refuse the CT scan prior to discharge and he called me about all this; I am a nurse. I told him not to refuse the scan, in case they had misdiagnosed him and he had a P.E. (pulmonary embolus), and if so, they could give blood thinners and he'd be fine in a couple weeks. Well, that is exactly what they found; multiple P.E's. Had they given him their "protocols" of Resdemevir and a ventilator without the proper treatment, we would have buried him. Had he been allowed visitors and an advocate, perhaps one of us there could have asked the right questions and avoided the whole mess. This is just wrong to forbid visitation.

3.) I had a patient who had a complex shoulder joint, humerus and elbow replacement surgery (all at once); something only done either in Wichita or KC. She was from a small rural town in NE KS and had to travel 3 hrs to get here for it. Her husband was not allowed any visitation during her stay, or allowed any questions of staff prior to her hospital discharge. The poor woman was 83, hard of hearing, had limited understanding and very forgetful. She needed her husband there. She was discharged with a disposable wound vac that requires special equipment not available in her area. She had tons of drainage from the surgery and the cannister filled up within hours of being discharged. We couldn't get ahold of the right people or anyone to obtain the proper supplies to prevent complications and messy profuse drainage. It was a huge mess. I had to go thru the ortho office staff who didn't know what equipment was put on her, and they blew up at me for "bothering them" when "doctor was busy". I was furious that this lady was treated this way because we had no access to the hospital treatment team to get the right equipment to take care of the situation. All because of the covid restrictions of no visitation and really no access even to care coordinators at the time. This is inhumane. She ended up with drainage running all over her arm every day until the wound vac company got around to sending her replacements, which she had to go to the local hospital to have changed out. This all could have been avoided.

I am an orthopedic nurse case manager and there are other examples but these 3 were the most personal and extreme. There simply must be protections of our rights to where we can take care of, and be advocates; to be present with our family and loved ones in the most crucial times of their lives.

Please support and pass this bill. Thank you.