

Thank you members of the Committee. The impacts of the pandemic has been detrimental to my family. The division the mandates have caused between the vaccinated and unvaccinated has resulted in those who have not been vaccinated and those who want medical freedom to be seen as villains. Division in families, the public, and the medical community is significant enough that it is the cause of more deaths than we will ever know. Whether from medical discrimination, suicide, or the limiting of access to medical care, these deaths are unnecessary and could have been easily prevented. Medical discrimination solely based on vaccination status resulted in the suffering and death of my dad, Dale Knopf.

The 68<sup>th</sup> World Medical Association General Assembly (2017) revised the Hippocratic Oath highlighting the autonomy and dignity of the patient. Included in the oath is the following:

AS A MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION:

I SOLEMNLY PLEDGE to dedicate my life to the service of humanity;

THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF MY PATIENT will be my first consideration;

I WILL RESPECT the autonomy and dignity of my patient;

I WILL MAINTAIN the utmost respect for human life;

**I WILL NOT PERMIT considerations of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, sexual orientation, social standing or any other factor to intervene between my duty and my patient; (World Medical Association, 2021).**

My family has experienced what happens when this oath is not just ignored but outright violated. My parents are both in their 70's. They are the proud parents of 5 children and 16 grandchildren. They are kind, hardworking, loving and would give their last dollar to a person in need – and have in the past.

Physicians have always been seen as the heroes in our family. Their knowledge and expertise were respected. On October 24, 2021, my parents' health took a turn for the worse. Their COVID symptoms were now so severe they were not even able to walk without help.

I helped them check in to Salina Regional Health Center at 6:43pm. The registration nurses were very kind and attentive. I let them know my dad is unable to hear most conversations and they would need to make sure everyone spoke slowly and loud and to verify he understood them. Due to COVID protocols, I was unable to stay with them.

At 7:00pm, I received a call from mom stating her physician (Dr. Braeden Johnson) was screaming at her and she didn't know what to do. She sounded scared, upset, and did not understand why she was being treated in this manner. I could hear him yelling. I told her I was on my way and she did not have to speak with anyone until I got a patient advocate for her. I immediately called the hospital and asked to speak with anyone to find out what was going on and was immediately placed on hold. I arrived at 7:04pm.

Dr. Johnson stepped out of the room and then poked his head back in stating that my dad had refused treatment and they both needed to leave. Mom quickly got dressed and stepped out to ask the nurse where my dad was. The first nurse went to help her. Then another nurse came over yelling at my mom to get out now. She had already called security on my 5ft, 100lb, sick, elderly mom – and told her she wasn't moving fast enough. She was calling the police department to make sure she left. She continued to scream "Get out" even though my mom did not have a ride and had no idea what was going on with my dad. My mom was never discharged, never had her vitals taken prior to leaving, and never received any treatment – contrary to what has been documented in her ER visit note.

My mom was standing outside with a security guard next to her. My mom is in her 70's and was very sick. She was shaking and upset. It is dark and cold outside. She told me Dr. Johnson walked in the room and demanded to know why she had not been vaccinated. She attempted to respond but he only screamed at her stating he would not waste resources treating her when those treatments could be used for people who matter. He told her she was ignorant and was a threat to him since he was vaccinated. At no point did he conduct a physical examination on her or order any tests.

I checked my mom's temperature and oxygen levels as soon as I got there – 101° and 89 O2. The security guard stood by my vehicle as my mom got in. I then went into the ER to find out what was going on. (I was still on-hold with hospital- no one ever bothered to answer)

Before anyone would even speak with me, my dad walked out of the ER holding discharge papers looking very confused. I helped him to my vehicle as he could barely walk. He asked me what was going on. I told him they refused to treat mom due to her vaccination status and kicked her out when she asked for someone to advocate for her.

He informed me that his physician (Dr. Zachary Jepson) came in and would not speak so he could understand him. He even asked him if someone could help explain what was going on. Dr. Jepson told him no and left the room. No physical examination was done on him either. He stated Dr. Jepson told him that he can just go home and let his immune system heal itself and that his wife had refused treatment. The nurse then came in with discharge papers and told him he needed to leave since treatment was refused. He told her he did not refuse treatment. He told her he did want treatment. He

was told it was too late and he needed to leave immediately. His vitals were 103° and 85 O2. They had both been in the ER less than 20 minutes for their “visit”.

I was barely able to get my parents home and to their bedroom. They both refused to let me take them anywhere else as they were convinced no one would help them. No one would provide emergency treatment due to the simple fact they had not yet been vaccinated. Their lives were deemed not worthy to save.

By morning my dad’s vitals were still bad. He was unable to even sit up. He could not do anything to care for himself. My strong, invincible dad could not even pull up his jeans. I continued to reach out to those in the medical field whom I respected to find out where I could take them. Somewhere they would be at the very least treated like human beings and be seen as worthy of saving. I called my brother and had to have his assistance to get my dad dressed and into the vehicle. The consensus among everyone I spoke with was Stormont Vail in Topeka would not only have the resources to help him, but more importantly, they have medical professionals who care about their patients.

We drove 2 hours to get help knowing that they could continue to decompensate and possibly die before we received treatment. Even with that, they still had a greater likelihood of surviving than if they tried to return to Salina Regional.

My dad died 10 days later. Upon admission to Stormont Vail, he was septic and had double Covid pneumonia. Dr. Jepson killed my dad. The “physicians” at Salina Regional told my parents their lives were not worth saving. They did not see human beings- they saw the lowest scum of the earth solely based on their vaccination status.

The pain from this only deepened when I was made aware of the numerous families who these same 2 doctors “treated” and were sent home to die - including a healthy, 42 year old veteran who proudly served our country. This person voluntarily risked his life for our country only to be seen as not worthy. These physicians have publicly shared on social media the disdain they have for those unvaccinated. One even stated “the upside is at least they won’t be around to vote in the next election”.

Regardless of your stance on vaccinations (I personally have been fully vaccinated), this should outrage you. Salina Regional has taken it upon themselves to not only play god but to also set an arbitrary standard on what makes a life worth saving. Everyone should have the opportunity to make this choice on their own. No matter who a person is, their life is worth saving.