

Dear Mr. Swedish,

I'm hoping you can help me. I am the son of Israel Neustadter, who died three years ago at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland. Since his death I have tried to persuade the hospital to take seriously my concerns about the treatment he received, without success. That left my only remedy as to pursue a lawsuit which has recently been filed. As the parent organization of Holy Cross, I trust that your interest in assuring quality medical care for the elderly is the same as my interest in seeing that patients like my father receive appropriate care. If so, perhaps we can resolve this matter without the need for litigation.

My elderly and gentle father was **refused ventilation** as a patient at Holy Cross. This life-sustaining treatment was first requested and later demanded by me, his only surviving family member and caretaker. But those requests were shrugged off by the medical staff with the explanation that he was essentially too old to get life-saving care. They did not seem to understand that my and his religious beliefs required the best medical care to preserve life, if there was even the smallest chance of survival.

Shortly afterward my father died in the most horrific of circumstances. To top this off, the hospital discharge summary falsely stated that the medical staff spoke with me and that I refused intubation. Please note: According to the Orthodox Jewish religion practiced by me and my father, I could not have refused such treatment. In fact, the medical records throughout his hospital stay indicate that I requested and desired the most aggressive treatment to save his life. They obviously show no indication of a discussion with me in which I refused medical treatment for him.

All I sought in my negotiations with the hospital was a truthful and complete accounting of the events that occurred, along with safeguards to prevent this kind of situation from ever happening again. Holy Cross replied that in order to answer my questions they would have to interview the doctors involved and take a position one way or another based on what they say - and the hospital refused to do that. This is unfortunate and seems inconsistent with your mission of providing quality care to patients and respecting religious beliefs.

I've read the mission statement on your website laying out your core values, as well as your pamphlet on organizational integrity. The impression I get is one of unusual sincerity and seriousness. You affirm in the strongest terms that you treasure and hold human life sacred from its simplest beginnings until its end. What happened to my father should be as abhorrent to you as Catholics as it is to me as a religious Jew. If your sacred mission is not being followed at one of your affiliates, I would think you'd want to send an unambiguous message that such conduct will not be tolerated.

Mr. Swedish, my father did not deserve to die the way he did and I am hoping that an institution of Trinity Health's caliber will deem it unacceptable to sweep what happened under the rug. While I understand that you and those copied in on this note are unlikely to be able to reply to me personally, I am appealing to you to take my father's tragedy into your hearts and to posthumously do right by him. Please prevail upon Holy Cross to reconsider my proposal for a resolution by undertaking a complete and truthful investigation of all the concerns I brought to their attention and working with me openly and in good faith to resolve them.

Sincerely,

Alexander H. Neustadter