

Appendix #318

1



Department of
Medicine

General Internal
Medicine

Dec. 25, 1997

Ronald Kaufman, MD
Medical Director
LAC+USC Medical Center
GH - Rm 1110

Re: Mr. ZZ -- HIV+ patient with multi-system failure and lymphoma who was resuscitated against his wishes.

Dear Dr. Kaufman,

Mr. ZZ. was transferred to my Cardinal C internal medicine team from Queen of the Valley hospital on Dec. 22, 1997 with the new diagnosis of high-grade lymphoma involving his liver. His previous AIDS-related complications included pneumocystis pneumonia and Kaposi's Sarcoma requiring 11 cycles of combination chemotherapy. The patient's recent and remote memory had also recently deteriorated and his mini-mental status score of 22/30 indicated a mild dementia. Laboratory studies on admission showed severe pancytopenia and severe liver dysfunction (albumen = 1.3 and bilirubin = 6.7). On Dec. 23, 1997 I evaluated the patient and prepared to discuss his resuscitation status when the hematology exerted their authority as Mr. ZZ's long-standing primary care service and transferred him to their service. No one consulted me in this decision.

On Dec. 25, 1997, the patient was transferred back to my service from hematology after he had been intubated and placed on pressors to maintain his blood pressure. The hematology service had not documented a discussion of code status with the patient or his family. Since the patient was in coma, I requested that the family come to the hospital to discuss his condition. They brought with them a copy of an advanced directive signed by the patient that stated that he wanted no extraordinary measures to prolong his life. The family said that this advanced directive was documented in his AIDS clinic chart before the outside hospital admission. The family was very upset that we had gone against the patient's wishes and placed him on a mechanical ventilator.

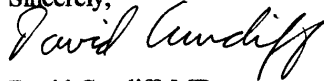
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Appendix #318

2

What we did could be interpreted as an assault.
Please let me know what you will do to prevent recurrences.
Thank you.

Sincerely,



David Cundiff, MD
General Internal Medicine
LAC+USC Medical Center

cc: Shirley Shot Nomoto, RN, Quality Assurance Committee
Alexandra Levine, Chief of Hematology
Mark Finucane, Director