

10:02 (2 minutes)	Patient Story   Beryl
10:05 - 11:05	Speakers   Claire Trescott & Jimi Bush

### Story by Beryl Knauth about her sister

On her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, I gave my beloved sister, Natalie, comfortable pajamas to wear during her recovery from an upcoming elective surgery to relieve the discomfort of spinal stenosis. Otherwise, Nat was a healthy active woman looking forward to a full life with her family and her husband, who had recently retired.

Within weeks following her surgery Nat began displaying worrisome neurological and physical symptoms. Four months later she was finally diagnosed with a rare form of fungal meningitis and declared “terminal.” At this point the hospital essentially cut her loose, leaving her bereaved and confused family to deal with the fall-out. Nat managed to hang on for almost 2 more years, treated by countless medical professionals at numerous facilities. Conspicuously missing was a primary care physician from the original hospital to oversee her care.

Although it was clear to us that her infection was “hospital acquired”, the hospital denied this, trying to convince us that she was somehow responsible for her condition.

At the time of her death Nat was a quadriplegic, unable to speak eat, or even blink her eyes due to facial paralysis. She died in Hospice care at an Adult Family Home, 21 months after the fatal surgery.

Following Nat’s death I began a dialogue with the hospital about her case. During this time I discovered through news reports, the following information:

*“For 17 months, patients of the ‘this hospital’ were put at risk because the hospital repeatedly failed to keep critical drug mixing areas clean and sterile. IV and injectable drugs were produced in pharmacies that were so dirty, they failed inspections.”*

When I confronted the hospital, I was met with defiance and denials. However the hospital finally acknowledged that Nat’s infection was “hospital acquired”... a fact discovered at the time of her diagnosis, but concealed from her family. I was told that I was “mistaken” about the pharmacies, even though the public record of the failed inspections is there for anyone to see.

- **What if** the hospital pharmacies had corrected the issues of non-compliance?
- **What if** the hospital had been transparent and accountable with Nat and her family?