



Canadian Family in Life Support Battle Denied Request for Hospital Transfer

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The parents of a Canadian boy ordered off life support by government health officials have been denied a request to transfer the 13-month-old to the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

London Health Sciences Centre in Ontario, Canada, was advised Thursday by the Michigan hospital that the boy would not be transferred.

Moe Maraachli and his wife, Sana Nader, of Windsor, Ontario, wanted the Michigan hospital to perform a tracheotomy on their son Joseph, who is currently kept alive by a respirator. The boy suffers from a rare, progressive neurological disease which, Canadian doctors say, has left him in a vegetative state beyond recovery.

A spokesman for Maraachli told FoxNews.com the family is "working on an appeal" to the Michigan hospital's decision. The hospital declined to comment on "any matters surrounding the case."

Joseph's parents believed that if the Detroit hospital had accepted the child and conducted the operation, in which doctors would place a breathing tube in his windpipe, he could be cared for at home.

Canadian health care allocation officials already ruled that Joseph had to be taken off life support and allowed to die in the hospital. A Canadian judge then ruled that Maraachli had to give his consent to having the breathing tube removed by Monday. He refused.

Health care economist Dr. Devon Herrick, a senior fellow at the National Center for Policy Analysis, said the structure of the Canadian health care system allows public officials to make patient care decisions.

"Hospitals have global budgets as opposed to charging patients or their insurance companies, so the officials would have far more power over what their individual hospitals do," Herrick

said. "If it were in the U.S., you wouldn't have public officials who would have the power to tell a hospital to do this or do that."

Maraachli says turning off life support could cause his son to choke and suffocate. He told Fox News on Wednesday that the doctors at London Health Sciences Centre have said the "best treatment" is to "let him die... I don't know what kind of treatment that [is]."

The family believes this procedure will allow Joseph to breathe on his own, and thereby be able to go home and likely die there.

Doctors are now asking the Canadian government to allow them to remove the breathing tube without the family's consent. The Ontario hospital contends that a tracheotomy would be painful for the boy, despite their argument that Joseph is in a vegetative state.

Officials at the Ontario hospital appeared to be cooperating with the transfer request and sent Joseph's full medical record to Children's Hospital of Michigan on Monday.

"Our focus at this time is supporting the family by providing compassionate and dignified care, and comfort to both the patient and his parents," the hospital said on its website.

Moe Maraachli scheduled a press conference to discuss the matter on Thursday afternoon, but did not show up because the hospital will be negotiating with the family's lawyer on Friday, the London Free Press reports.