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Dear Editor, JFL Hospital Negligence Almost Cost Me My Life

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Juan F. Luis Hospital Emergency Room By. ERNICE GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

Dear Editor,

On Wednesday, 1/22/2020, I started feeling sick. By Saturday, 1/25/2020, I went to see my personal physician. I had the Flu with nausea and vomiting. I was given medications and instructions to stay hydrated and get lots of rest. However, by Monday 1/27/2020, I was not better but worse. The ambulance came for me at my home. The attendant started an IV and took me to the hospital. The ER stated that I was seen on that day for vomiting and diarrhea.

I was given antibiotics and nausea medication through an IV. Once the IV and medications were finished, they sent me home with more oral medications and instructions to keep hydrated. I was

told that if I didn't get any better to come back to the hospital.

I still didn't get any better. I got worse. More vomiting and diarrhea continued. I was very weak from the vomiting and pain everywhere. I have Rheumatoid Arthritis and couldn't take my medications either, so this made my situation worse.

On 1/30/2020 we went to see my physician and was given IV and antibiotics. I was very dehydrated. I was given instructions that I would need to go back to the hospital if I didn't get better. I didn't get better, so I went back to the emergency room.

On 2/01/2020, the ambulance came back for the second time. This time, they did a flu test where you get Q-tips inserted into your nostrils (most awful thing in the world). No IV this time. I got to the ER and I begged the doctor to have me admitted but he said they needed to find out what was going on. They drew blood and did the urine sample. Bathrooms were outside of the building, not clean. They said I had a UTI. I got antibiotics through the IV and nausea medications. I again begged to be admitted, I was told that there was no need. Also if I didn't get better, to come back to the ER. They give me oral antibiotics and nausea medications.

Now remember I can't keep anything down, so I can't take the medications. Of course I didn't get better.

My husband called MASA and explained the situation and that we needed to go off island for treatment. A MASA representative stated that in order for them to do that, they would have to have the hospital tell them that they couldn't do anything for me and I would need to go off island for treatment.

On Monday 2/3/2020, we went back to the ER. We signed in and my husband told the nurse that this was our 3rd visit to the ER. I was registered and was in a room within 1 to 1 ½ hours later. I begged the doctor to please admit me and he said that they would find out the problem first, but so far I didn't fit the criteria for being admitted. They did the blood work and urine sample.

Bathroom outside was disgustingly filthy. I got IV with antibiotics and nausea medications. I was told that I had a UTI and I should start feeling better by Wednesday. I was sent home with more oral medications. I was given suppositories for the nausea. I was happy about that so I didn't have to have any oral medications that I was unable to take.

In between these three visits, I had an X-Ray of my abdominal area and possibly of my chest. Not sure. Being that the hospital handled my case, MASA couldn't do anything.

I was devastated because I couldn't keep anything down. I felt defeated and betrayed by the people that were supposed to make me feel better. We went home and I continued to have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, even though I had nothing in my stomach or system. I was vomiting the bitter bile in my stomach. I felt so weak and dizzy.

By Tuesday 2/4/2020, I told my friend Maria and my husband Stanford, that I felt I was dying.

We booked the flight to Miami to leave that afternoon. We arrived at the hotel in Miami around 9 pm. We got to Jackson Memorial Hospital around 10:30 PM. There were approximately 150-175 people already there. By 1:15 AM, I was in a room. They had taken chest x rays, abdominal x-rays, blood work, urine sample and a EKG. My vitals were irregular so I was taken very seriously. By 2:00 AM, they had all the tests back and I was diagnosed with severe dehydration, Influenza, pneumonia (infection on both lungs). Because I had the flu for over to 2 ½ weeks, the Doctors were concerned that the infection would go into my blood, so I was isolated in a room for

6 days. I was given IV, lots of antibiotics, flu and nausea medications. Aside from my doctors, I had infection control doctors and staff do 1 or 2 visits per day. Within 2 days, I started to feel better and rested.

I am still feeling weak because of the hard ordeal this was on my body. But I thank God for all the prayers and well wishes from my friends and family and that I was able to go off island for treatment.

Now, I would like to know why did the ER took my case so lightly when they knew from the beginning that I had an autoimmune medical issue. Why they so carelessly kept telling me that I didn't fit the criteria for being admitted to the hospital and go home? Why is it that the people of the USVI have to endure this mediocre medical treatment? How many people are dying because of this treatment? Governor? Senators? Hospital Administrators? How long is this going to continue?

Laura Fabio

A U.S. Virgin Islander

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