

Jeanne Hamilton

Mystic CT

Good afternoon Senator Handley and Representative Sayers and other members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Jeanne Hamilton and I serve as President of the CT Center for Patient Safety.

I am here today to ask that you strengthen Senate bill 579 asking hospitals to develop a plan to deal with the prevalence of MRSA. A plan is too late and too little to ask hospitals.

My father fell and got a small cut on the back of his head. He went to the ER for 4 staples and got MRSA. He was dead 12 days later.

This is the very short version of a heartbreaking time in my family's life.

What I want to point out is that this can happen to anyone. My father received the very best care as soon as he passed through the doors of the hospital. It was, after all, his hospital. My father was a retired physician and the retired president and Executive director of that hospital. He dedicated his life to quality health care for all.

Screening patients for MRSA is an important step in preventing the spread of this devastating infection. The cost is minuscule when compared to the cost of care for a patient with MRSA. The "average" added cost of MRSA is \$36,000 per incidence but you will hear testimony today where it added hundreds of thousands in preventable costs.

If you want to put a face to MRSA you need look no further than your bathroom mirror tomorrow morning.

People should be compensated when it is not their fault



T. Stewart Hamilton

My father lived at Duncaster in Bloomfield. He had just turned 91 when he died.

On May 5, 2002 my father had cataract surgery. It was "butchered" (a quote from his third Dr.), causing loss of vision in one eye and his depth perception in the other eye. He had to have a second eye surgery a week later to relieve the blood clot left in the eye, a result of the first surgery. Needless to say "we" went to a new doctor 8 long, painful weeks after the first surgery. He was improving enough to get ready to have a third surgery to aid his vision, hopefully. Dad was old, with his share of medical problems, but he exercised every day, did the crossword puzzle in ink daily, and we were planning a cruise.

It never occurred to either of us that a 4" cut would cause my father's death.

On July 17, 2002 he fell and was taken to the ER. The hospital wanted to keep him overnight to "rule things out". The overnight lasted 4 days. He was released July 21, on portable oxygen, to the nursing facility at Duncaster, but he began to hallucinate and we returned to the hospital via ambulance in the morning. The care in the ER was fantastic. He was incubated, of his own choice, and staph infection was confirmed.

He was in the ICU for 7 days. Each day we had hope and each day his condition worsened. The wound was the sight of the infection. The staples were removed, cleaned up and stitched. The ICU doctor, who was wonderful, asked to speak with me, alone, on July 28. I knew, before he said a word, it was time to let my father go. Pop had had enough.

The death certificate and medical records state that cause of death was heart failure. The real cause of death was a massive staph infection that his body and every antibiotic in the book couldn't fight.

The original eye Dr. no longer practices in Connecticut. But don't worry about him; he is an expert witness for hire.

My father's name should not matter.

But it does to me and might be of interest to you.

My father was T. Stewart Hamilton, MD

Among his many accomplishments:

- He was a medical doctor and hospital administrator during his tenure, his hospital was one of the top 10 in the country.
- He was elected president of Ct. Hospital Association and a Distinguished Service Award here has been named for him.
- He was elected president of NE Hosp. Assembly, American Hospital Association and received Distinguished Service Awards both of those groups
- He received 4 Honorary Degrees
- He was inducted into The Health Care Hall of Fame at the age of 88
- His handling of the tragic Hartford Hospital fire in 1961 helped change fire safety laws and regulations throughout the country.
- His hospital received the first Medicare check issued because of his input into the passage of that bill.

My father spent his life trying to better health care in this country and abroad.

If my father's death can help improve health care and patient safety; that may be the final piece of his legacy.



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