

BILL #160

WILLIAM'S LAW

William Daniel Parker was born December 23, 2015, and died December 25, 2015, Christmas Day, having never felt the loving touch of his mother.

William was denied this most basic of human interaction, because he and his twin sister were born prematurely at one hospital by Caesarean section and immediately transferred 40 miles away to a hospital that had a NICU—a neonatal intensive care unit. His insurance company requires a pre-authorization for a maternal transfer but they had no one on duty over the holiday weekend that was capable of authorizing his mother's transfer. William's mother was left behind to worry and pray that they would hang on until she was able to join them. Sadly, for William and for his parents, that was not to be.

As a nurse for 37 years, I know that emergencies happen at all times with no regard for our arbitrary time schedule. A health insurance company should know this as well. If an insurance company is going to require preauthorization for a maternal transfer, then it needs to have staff on duty 24/7 to authorize such requests. Not just an operator to take the message and tell them to call back after the holiday as what happened in this case.

My preference would be for all insurance companies to allow maternal transfers without any preauthorization required. Time is often of the essence in such cases. It should be easy to pro-rate the coverage for each hospital based on days of stay. And for anyone who thinks this is asking too much, I would like to point out that if a mom is on Medicaid, then she is allowed to transfer to be with her baby--no questions asked and no preauthorization required.

Ironically, it is people like William's parents--taxpayers--who are paying for that Medicaid privilege--a privilege that they themselves were denied. I am urging you to pass this bill--a bill we call William's Law--and even expand it to require coverage similar to what Medicaid provides so that no other family goes through what the Parkers had to endure.

I would like to thank the nurses at Windham Hospital who advocated for their patient and wouldn't take no for an answer and to the nurses and staff of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center NICU at UConn Health who have wrapped the Parker family in loving care for over two months as their daughter continues to grow and thrive. You are the embodiment of nursing and I am honored to work with you.

I would also like to thank the following members of the State Legislature who answered my plea for help and were instrumental in getting William's Law to this point:

Senator Henri Martin
Senator Joe Markley
Senator Dante Bartolomeo
Rep. Themis Klarides
Rep. Prasad Srinivasan
and House Clerk Martin Dunleavy

Thank you.