



Christian Voices for Life

Weekly Pro-Life

Education

Prayer

Action

DNR orders without Parental Knowledge or Consent



Education: A few weeks ago we wrote about doctors sometimes deciding not to try to save a very premature baby, whom they see as having little hope to survive.(1) The story continues – babies who do survive can be given a “Do Not Resuscitate” order without the parent’s knowledge or consent! The Journal of Medical Ethics recently published a survey of neonatologists on whether it was ethical to issue such an order without even consulting the parents. 76% of the 490 respondents said it was ethical if they “felt it impossible” for the child to survive. 61% said it was ethical if they felt the child’s survival was “unlikely”.(2)

In the story covered by LifeNews.com, 7 year old Lane Hauber is pictured, wearing oxygen tubes, but smiling. Lane was born with holes in his heart, which might be corrected by surgery. When he was a few days old, however, he was diagnosed to have an extra chromosome. Shortly after that, his father discovered a DNR order on his paperwork. They were told he would only live a week and given no information or support. He has obviously survived for 7 years, although the holes in his heart have yet to be repaired. His parents felt angry and lied to by the hospital, and wonder if their son might be better off now if he had been given the best care possible rather than being written off as a lost cause. (3)

1. “Deciding Not to Treat a Premie”, email published 3/2/2016, available at www.christianvoicesforlife.org/documents/2016/2/Deciding-not-to-treat-a-preemie.pdf
2. <http://www.bioedge.org/bioethics/unilateral-do-not-resuscitate-orders-what-doctors-think/11807>
3. <http://www.lifenews.com/2016/03/24/shock-study-76-of-doctors-say-its-ok-to-put-dnr-on-disabled-baby-without-telling-his-parents/>



Prayer: Dear Jesus, Please have mercy on parents of children born with a handicap. Help them to obtain the best care possible for their child, while trusting in You to be with their family in all situations. Please open the hearts of the doctors who care for these children to do all that they can to treat them, and to recognize the rights of the parents to participate in decisions about the care of their child. Help them to leave the outcome of the treatment in your hands alone. Help every child to be treated with the respect they deserve as children created in your image, regardless of any handicap or illness they might be burdened with.



Action: Spread the word among your friends and family: if a child is born with a serious handicap, their parents need to make it clear to the doctor that they want all possible care to be given to their child. Even during any pregnancy, a mother should discuss with their doctor that in the case that the child is born very prematurely, or if they should be born with a serious problem, that all possible care should be given and in no circumstances should a DNR order be given without their knowledge and consent.

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