

Sunset Advisory Commission

Hello, My name is Kathryn Hilburn and I'm here to testify against the Deregulation of Respiratory Therapist in Texas.

The reason is simple; I don't want anyone else to endure what my sister went through the last 4 days of her life. She was a trachea patient due to an accident in 2007. From 2008 through just last year, she had 3 ENT's tell her she would never be able to live without the support of her trachea. They had each ran extensive tests to determine this. Unfortunately she lived in a nursing home in Silsbee, TX from 2009 until her death June 17, 2014. On Friday June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at the request of a respiratory therapist her doctor wrote an order for her trachea to be capped. She was very anxious when they did this, but the RT keep reassuring her she fine and she just needed to learn to breathe through her nose and out her mouth. On Sunday June 15, 2014 in the early morning hours, she called my 82 yr. old mother to tell her the nurses weren't answering her call light or the phone at the nurses' station. My mother in turn tried to call the nurses' station herself to no avail; she then had to resort to calling 911. When the police got there, the nurse poked her head into Charlene's room and said, "Oh she's sleeping now, she's fine" and "miraculously" the phones started working again. I went down to Silsbee the following day, Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, to check on her and have a "family counsel" meeting with the Administrator and the Director of Nurses. Charlene was sitting in her wheelchair in the dining room with her plate of food in front of her just starting down. I sat down and tried to feed her, but she said she wasn't hungry. I also noticed her eyes would sometimes roll back, but then they would straighten out. I thought she was given a little too much pain medication, but then she complained about her legs hurting really badly, so I was confused.

During the meeting, the nurse stated several times, they were checking her Oxygen level quite frequently, and it was so much better with the cap on than it was when it was off. I asked them how they were doing that, and she told me they were using a finger O2 monitor. She said that the oxygen would go to all of the major organs first, then to the small capillaries in the fingers, so she was very confident Charlene was getting enough oxygen. Charlene's ex husband was there

also, and he even stated that he thought this type of procedure should be done in a hospital setting and not in the nursing home; the nurse reassured us they knew what they were doing.

**The next morning, I got a call from the nursing home that Charlene had died.**

My heart is broken, because even though I know my sister isn't in any more pain, they tortured her the last 4 days of her life and I believed the Respiratory Therapist when she told us she knew what she was doing when she apparently DID NOT!

DE-REGULATING THIS FIELD WILL ONLY OPEN UP THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE PATIENTS DYING AT THE HANDS OF UNTRAINED, UNREGULATED, <sup>+</sup>IGNORANT, AND ~~UNCARING~~ UNCARING PEOPLE.

PLEASE DO NOT DE-REGULATE THIS FIELD!!!