

# After baby's death, mother calls for changes at hospital

Associated Press

SALEM — An Oregon mother who watched her 7-week-old baby die of meningitis is calling for changes at a hospital from which the child was initially discharged.

Ginger McCall said her daughter was discharged from Salem Hospital's emergency room with what staff said was a routine infection, the Salem Statesman Journal reported. Hours later, the girl's vital signs crashed. She died two days later.

"My hope is that something good can come out of this," McCall said. "What I want the most is to raise awareness so this doesn't happen to anyone else."

Salem Hospital officials cited privacy concerns in declining comment on the death. "This is a heartbreaking loss, and Salem Health offers its deepest condolences," officials said in statement.

McCall is an attorney and state official who works as Oregon's public records advocate.

Her daughter, Evianna Rose Quintero-McCall, came down with a fever on March 15, McCall said. She cried a weak, moaning cry, which McCall later learned is a sign of Group B strep meningitis.

McCall and her mother-in-law rushed the baby to Salem Hospital. She was given Tylenol and sent home.

McCall wishes that she would have known to insist on a meningitis test, she said, or that she had driven to Oregon Health & Science University's Doernbecher Children's Hospital in Portland, where the infection might have been recognized.



Anna Reed/Statesman Journal

**Ginger McCall's 7-week-old daughter, Evianna Quintero-McCall, died of meningitis after being discharged from the Salem Hospital emergency room with a fever.**

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Ginger McCall

"There's a stereotype of a hysterical, panicked, first-time mom, and that probably affected the situation," McCall said.

She told staff she tested positive for Strep B while pregnant. Expectant mothers are typically tested for the Group B strep infection and treated with antibiotics. However, the bacterial infection can be passed to babies.

A few hours after leaving the emergency room, McCall brought her baby to her pediatrician. After the baby threw up, the doctor told her to rush back to the emergency room and he called to alert hospital staff. A flurry of activity followed and the baby was transported by ambulance to Doernbecher Children's Hospital. She died March 17.

"They did their very best, but by the time she got there, it was just too late," McCall said.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4,100 cases of bacterial meningitis, and 500 deaths, are reported on average every year.

Babies can contract meningitis at birth, through the air from people coughing and sneezing, or from contaminated food.

McCall wants parents to know the warning signs.

"I hope they will strongly advocate for themselves and their children," she said. "I hope they will appreciate every moment they have with their children."

Her main hope is for hospital staff to become better educated about meningitis symptoms, she said, and for hospitals to change their protocol.

"I would like it for them to be trained to recognize the signs of this because it is so catastrophic and it happens so fast," she said. "Every minute matters."

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