

Publication of State Report Allowed Hospital Death is Reviewed

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Two years ago, Mark Petrie sued Newton-Wellesley **Hospital** for allegedly causing his wife's **death** with an overdose of morphine and other drugs hours after she gave birth to their baby girl.

Then, after hearing rumors earlier this year that he was responsible for his wife's **death** - spread, he says, by **hospital** staff - he launched a full-blown crusade against the **hospital**, culminating today with a newspaper reprint of a **state report** critical of the care his wife received. The \$4,000, seven-page **report** is slated to appear in today's Newton Tab, over the objection of lawyers for **hospital** workers who failed yesterday to convince a judge to block **publication** of the 1997 review.

"They've taken my whole life from me," Petrie said yesterday. "Now they want to take my reputation and my wife's reputation. They simply can't have it. I'll fight until the last breath's out of me."

This is the latest assault by Petrie, who along with his in-laws picketed the **hospital** last spring as Boston Marathoners raced past. They carried a sign bearing a picture of his two children and the message, "Newton-Wellesley **Hospital** killed my mother."

Petrie, a former respiratory therapist at the **hospital**, also helped start a Web site in his wife's memory.

Charlotte Petrie died in May 1997, hours after delivering a healthy baby, when she suffered cardiopulmonary arrest. She was 27.

Her **death** received extensive media coverage because another young mother, who had recently delivered a stillborn child, died at the **hospital** the following day from a strep infection.

The **state** Department of Public Health investigated those **deaths**. Although the agency's **reports** found serious systemic problems, they stopped short of blaming the **deaths** on **hospital** errors.

In the **report** Petrie is publishing, the department found **hospital** workers responded slowly after his wife stopped breathing. It took about five minutes before the resuscitation team was called and CPR was begun, according to the **report**. A nurse had to run to another unit to get a defibrillator, which wasn't used until nine minutes after CPR had begun, the **report** said.

The nursing staff also failed to double-check and document settings on the medicine pump, it said.

Yesterday, lawyers for the two doctors and four nurses being sued by Petrie asked for a restraining order prohibiting him from publishing the **report**. Such widespread distribution, they argued, would taint potential jurors in the lawsuit.

"We respect Mr. Petrie's legal right to want to publish this piece," said **hospital** spokesman Brian O'Dea. "But we also support the defendants who were named in the case to pursue this legal action to get a fair trial."

Another **hospital** spokeswoman, Rachel Kagno, said she knew nothing about the rumors Petrie described. "Newton-Wellesley has no reason to believe that Mr. Petrie had any responsibility for this tragic event," she said.

But Superior Court Judge Christopher Muse denied the request to block **publication** of the **report**, saying it would violate Petrie's freedom of speech. And since the case will be tried in Suffolk Superior Court - more than a year from now - readers in the Middlesex County towns reached by the Newton Tab would not be part of the jury pool, he said.