



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Regina, SK

Day 2

May 31, 2024

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 6: Evelien Wiersma**

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**Wayne Lenhardt**

Our next witness is Evelien Wiersma. Evelien, can you hear me? Okay, first of all, could you spell your name for us? And then I'll do an oath with you, and we'll go on from there.

**Evelien Wiersma**

Okay. First and last?

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Yes.

**Evelien Wiersma**

Okay, first name. E-V-E-L-I-E-N. Last name W-I-E-R-S-M-A.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth during your testimony?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes, I do.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

How do you pronounce your first name again, because I'm apt to get it wrong here?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Evelien.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. I gather what you're going to talk about today is your husband who got COVID ended up in the hospital and ended up passing away. So let me set the stage then. At, I believe, December 16th of 2021, your husband got ill. Could you tell us his age and his condition and whatnot, and set the stage for us for the rest of what happened?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Sure. We actually were meeting with a group on the weekend and someone was ill. And a few days later, we both started feeling not well. And on December 19, we took an at-home test and both tested positive. And I seemed to have milder symptoms than he did a few days later. His temperature was going up, his oxygen levels were going down, and he was sleeping almost nonstop. So I called the doctor's office.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Excuse me. How old was he?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Oh, sorry. He was 67.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, and what was his health like at that point?

**Evelien Wiersma**

He had excellent health. He, the week prior, biked around the block 21 km. He's a hunter. He's a construction worker. He had arthritis, but he didn't take anything for that. He was on no meds, no comorbidities.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, was he working or retired at that point?

**Evelien Wiersma**

He's a retired police officer. And then he started a construction company with his son-in-law. So he was still working, doing the planning of the homes, et cetera, the pricing.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, so December 16th, he gets ill. December 19th—this is all of 2021—he tests positive for COVID. And then what happens?

**Evelien Wiersma**

I called the doctor's office. I believe it was either the 20th or 21st. And I knew those were critical days that he needed help. And the advice I received: Wait until his oxygen levels dropped to 85 and his temperature goes up above 103 and call an ambulance. And when I questioned them on that, they said, "That's our policy."

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, so then you did that, am I correct?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And then what happened next?

**Evelien Wiersma**

On the 23rd, when I talked to Clair, he didn't seem to comprehend what I was saying. He didn't respond. His temperature really spiked. His oxygen levels went down. And since I wasn't feeling well either that day, I was kind of almost blacking out, I called our daughter and she was very, very concerned. And so she called an ambulance, with my permission.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And that was on, correct me if I'm wrong, December 23rd of 2021.

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Correct. And his fever spiked and his oxygen levels dropped to 85 or below, am I right? Yeah. So you called the ambulance, and then what happened? He went to the hospital, did he? Was he admitted?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Well, yes. I'd like to tell that story a little bit, because when the medics arrived, one went to Clair, the other questioned us on our vaccination status and obviously was not impressed. They wouldn't take a stretcher into our home, so they put Clair—somehow they got him outside, put him on a stretcher outside and it was a rainy, windy, cold day. He was dressed in shirt, socks and underwear. And when we questioned that, said, "You know, could you put a blanket on him, please?" He said, "No. Good for him. He's got a high temperature. Cool him down." So there was already a definite unease there on our part.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. So did they treat him in any way?

**Evelien Wiersma**

No. They took his temperature, checked his oxygen levels, and then just put him in the ambulance and took him to the hospital.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Did you go with him to the hospital?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Weren't allowed.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

They wouldn't let you go?

**Evelien Wiersma**

No.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

So they took him in. Where did they admit him to when they got to the hospital—or you don't know?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Well, I do know. They admitted him to emergency, and then from there, he was put on a medical floor.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. Are you aware if he got any medication?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Not the first 12 hours or so. All they gave him was oxygen and Tylenol.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Did he get worse at that point?

**Evelien Wiersma**

We weren't in contact with him, so hard for us to know. I just have to go by what we were told.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay.

**Evelien Wiersma**

And that was, that he was declining. So by the following day, they had transferred him to ICU.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. And I believe that was December 24. Is that correct?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And did they put him on a ventilator at some point?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes. And that's another story. During this time that he was in the hospital, no doctor contacted us. We never spoke to a doctor. We had to call if we wanted information. We were following FLCCC protocols, and so we asked them to use different medications. And of course, the answer always was, "The nurse didn't have the authority. We have to talk to a doctor." We'd say, "Let us talk to one." And that never occurred until December 25, when we got a call from a doctor and he said he had talked to Clair about being put on a ventilator, and Clair had said, "No." And that makes sense because Clair and I had researched this and decided that that's not the route we would go if it came to that.

So he tried to talk to us to talk to Clair to tell him to be ventilated, and I said, "No. If Clair is this bad, why don't you try something like ivermectin or something very similar?" The doctor became angry with us, told us he had other patients to look after, and basically hung up on us, but not until I had said to him, "Don't ventilate Clair until you've talked to me again."

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And did they ventilate him after that?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes. The following day, we got a call to let us know that he had been ventilated. So that was without our consent.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay, and this whole time you haven't gone into the hospital to see him because you weren't allowed, is that—

**Evelien Wiersma**

No. We asked every day. Our daughter had had COVID, so she had natural immunity. But their response was, not until Clair tests negative. And apparently he must never have tested negative.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

So your daughter never did go in to see him. Is that fair?

**Evelien Wiersma**

No, no.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. So then, again, going from your knowledge here, he got onto the ventilator on the 26th of December. Then what were you aware of after that? Did he get better or did he deteriorate, or what?

**Evelien Wiersma**

His oxygen levels went up and down. His blood pressure was up and down. Clair kept prior to this saying to us, "I'm not getting looked after here. I need to get out of here." And we did try that. We had called for help. He was a former police officer, so we approached the police and said, "Let us take him out. Don't come when they call you." But they didn't agree to do that. So while he was intubated, everything was up and down, up and down. We were not aware of the medications he was given. We knew very, very little. We had no contact with doctors or anything.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Then what happened after the 26th?

**Evelien Wiersma**

We received a call early December 30, and our daughter was told that her dad was dying. And when she asked if we could come to see him, she was told, "No." And she told them, "Well, we're coming anyways." So I and our four kids went to the hospital early that morning. I wasn't aware that they had said, "No." And we're then met by the hospital staff, who asked us what we were doing there. And we said, "Well, we've come to be with our husband, our dad."

And it took us, I would say, probably a good 15-20 minutes to convince them. And they finally let up myself and our oldest daughter. Now I am still recovering, and when I'm in stressful situations, I tend to get lightheaded. And that's exactly what happened when we were in Clair's room. And they called a code blue on me, took me out of his room, brought me to the ER. In the meantime, our other kids were told to stay out of the hospital. They had to wait outside. Our youngest daughter had just had a baby, and the security guards were extremely rude to her.

So here I was in ER. They allowed another of our kids up to be with our oldest daughter with dad. And I'm trying to get back up, and they won't let me. And so our children asked if one of them could be with me. And for a long time, they said, "No." And then finally they said, "Well, we'll be very gracious, but if one of you goes to be with your mom, then if that person goes to see his or her dad, they won't be able to go back to mom." So our son stayed with me. And every time we asked the doctor, the nurses, can we go up? The answer was no.

And then all of a sudden, out of the blue, it was, "Oh, you can go up now." So we did. And when the elevator door opened, I could look into Clair's room, and I knew he was gone. He died about ten minutes prior.

And so we were only allowed to have two people. We weren't allowed to be together after he died. They made me double mask. When my daughter asked for some water for me, that was refused. So that was an extremely difficult day. But I think what I want to point out most is the fact when Clair was admitted, he had pneumonia. They also saw a rise in white blood cells, so when I had a nurse look at his papers, she said it was a start of sepsis and he was never, ever treated for that. He was given no antibiotics. It was just let go. And they actually gave him two antibiotics about 3 hours before he died.

So I have four doctors look at Clair's records, all independently, and they all came to the same conclusion that had normal procedures been followed, Clair would very likely still be alive today.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Are you able to give us any specifics as to what the normal procedures would have been that they were suggesting should have been done?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Well normal procedure: I've been told by ER nurses if they get a patient with pneumonia, it doesn't matter what kind of pneumonia, they right away put them on antibiotics because pneumonia so easily turns into a bacterial infection. I had a brother-in-law in the past who had turned septic twice, and they gave him antibiotics—researched until they found out what was causing the sepsis, and then knew exactly which antibiotic to give him. So that's what should have been done for Clair as well, but it wasn't. So his death certificate lists two causes of death: one is septic shock and the other is COVID.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And so far as you know, there was nothing really done for either of those. Is that fair?

**Evelien Wiersma**

That's correct.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. I think I'm going to ask the commissioners if they have any questions. But just first of all, this was at the hospital in Chatham, Ontario? All of this happened in Chatham, is that correct?

**Evelien Wiersma**

That is correct.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Okay. And there's only one hospital in Chatham. Is that correct?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes, that's correct as well.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

And there is sort of one ambulance service in town. Is that also correct?

**Evelien Wiersma**

Yes, that's correct.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

So that all happened there. Okay. Do the commissioners have any questions?

**Commissioner Robertson**

Hi, I'm really sorry for your loss.

**Evelien Wiersma**

Thank you.

**Commissioner Robertson**

When he was traveling in the ambulance, did they do any treatments at all?

**Evelien Wiersma**

I have no idea. We were not made aware of that. I don't think so.

**Commissioner Robertson**

Okay. Then when he was in the ER, did they give him an IV or anything, any treatment?

**Evelien Wiersma**

I think they gave him oxygen and they continued to give him Tylenol to bring his fever down. And then I believe the following day, they started a steroid, dexamethasone. And that would be basically, as far as I know. I'm not a medical person, so when I read his health records, it's all very difficult for me to interpret, so I have to go by what the doctors told me and the nurses told me.

**Commissioner Robertson**

Okay, thank you.

**Wayne Lenhardt**

Are there any other questions? Okay. On behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, thank you very much for giving your testimony today.

**Evelien Wiersma**

All right, thank you.