

Cook Children's Statement Regarding Patient Tinslee Lewis

Fort Worth, Texas (November 15, 2019) – We at Cook Children's have a longstanding history of walking alongside parents and children through good and difficult times. For more than 100 years, it has been our mission to improve the health and well-being of every single patient who comes through our doors. Despite our desire to improve the lives of our patients, sometimes there's nothing more medicine can do, and continuing aggressive care causes further suffering to the patient. Sadly, this is the case with 9-month-old Tinslee Lewis.

Tinslee has spent her entire life at Cook Children's. We have cared for her every day since her arrival in February. Almost immediately after coming to Cook Children's, our surgeons and physicians began intensive work. She underwent her first surgery that same month. During this time, our doctors expressed their concern to Ms. Trinity Lewis that Tinslee had a high likelihood of not surviving her hospitalization due to her severe heart and lung disease.

Tinslee has been critically ill for the entirety of her life. On July 9th, she suffered further deterioration of a pulmonary hypertensive crisis due to severe chronic lung disease that resulted in a respiratory arrest. Aggressive resuscitative measures were not successful, and despite our concern for Tinslee's long-term survival, she was placed on Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO), a machine that replaces the function of the heart and lungs. This was done to give her even the narrowest chance of recovery. In addition, she was intubated and placed on a ventilator.

In Tinslee's time at Cook Children's, our care team has done everything they can to keep her alive. She's undergone multiple complex surgeries and despite our best efforts, shows no signs of improvement. In addition to the pain and suffering we believe Tinslee is experiencing, she requires significant sedation to help prevent a pulmonary hypertensive crisis, which can be brought on by even minor agitation.

Despite the circumstances, we always work closely with family members to determine the best course of action in their child's medical care. Tinslee's case is no exception. It's been misreported that we only recently discussed the gravity of Tinslee's condition with Ms. Lewis, but the truth is we've been engaged in these conversations for months. Throughout Tinslee's life here at Cook Children's, we've had multiple ongoing conversations with Ms. Lewis and her extended family regarding our concern for Tinslee's long-term survival. These conversations intensified in July when she was placed on ECMO and elevated in mid-August after a shunt surgery did not significantly improve her ability to oxygenate her body. Everyone on Tinslee's care team was in agreement that further care was futile in August. In early September, we began talking to the Lewis family about instituting a "Do Not Resuscitate" order and ultimately withdrawing support.

In early October, our physicians began reaching out to other facilities to determine if they would be willing to accept her as a patient. We talked to more than 20 hospitals and alternative care

facilities across the United States, including heart and lung transplant centers, and all agreed further care was futile. Our efforts to find another facility to care for Tinslee have not stopped and will not.

As medical professionals, our responsibility – our highest duty – is to save lives. We are still working with Ms. Lewis and Texas Right to Life to find alternative care, however, it is our sincere belief that further medical intervention is not in Tinslee’s best interest. With the temporary restraining order in place, we are continuing to treat and care for Tinslee as we always have. Nothing has changed.

Winifred King
Assistant Vice President of Public Relations
Cook Children’s Health Care System

About Cook Children’s

Cook Children’s Health Care System embraces an inspiring Promise – to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we’re proud of our long and rich tradition of serving our community.

Our not-for-profit organization encompasses nine companies – a medical center, two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children’s, Cook Children’s Health Services Inc., and Cook Children’s Health Foundation. With more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations throughout Texas, families can access our top-ranked specialty programs and network of services to meet their unique needs.

We’ve worked to improve the health of children from across our primary service area of Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise counties for more than 100 years. Based on the exceptional care we provide, patients travel to Cook Children’s from around the country and the globe to receive life-saving pediatric care built on leading technology, extraordinary collaboration and the art of caring.

For more information, visit cookchildrens.org.

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