

Sunday, November 14, 1999

Dear Family,

Carol and I visited Dad today at Bronson. Cindy was also there. Mom took the day off. Dad was sedated. He seemed to be sleeping comfortably and looked OK, but never woke up all the time we were there, even when Cindy rubbed his hands and head. He did grimace when she played with his feet. He was on the ventilator. The nurse said he was not expelling enough carbon dioxide. She said this morning she came in and found him standing by the side of the bed, which gave her a scare. She said he was disoriented, from carbon dioxide narcosis. They put him on the ventilator to force out the carbon dioxide, and near the end of our visit the doctor said the carbon dioxide had gone down enough that they could take him off the ventilator.

The nurse called the doctor in and we talked to him a while. Cindy let them know that she was not very happy to find him on the ventilator and that the living will said that they were to take no heroic means to keep him alive. The doctor said there was no living will in his records, and further that a living will had no legal force in Michigan. He said Dad had been his patient for only a couple days, not enough time for him to really know how well he could be expected to respond to treatment, and he also did not know what Dad himself wanted. He said he was quite willing to do whatever Dad wanted, and if Dad couldn't tell him, he'd go by what Mom said. If they wanted him off the ventilator, he would take him off. But he couldn't let us make that decision for them.

The doctor said that they'd increased his thyroid dosage by quite a lot. He said the dosage not being high enough could account for a lot of the problems he has been having, which does give me some hope that he has a chance to live comfortably a while longer. This could be just another one of those temporary setbacks.

Steve