

Hospital spurns dying youth

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A Chicago boy, bleeding from a gunshot wound, was left on the pavement outside a northside hospital May 16 after emergency room personnel refused to go outside and assist him. Fifteen-year-old Christopher Sercye was eventually carried inside the hospital by two policemen, but he bled to death shortly afterward.

Sercye had been playing basketball with some friends in the street alongside Ravenswood Hospital Medical Center when another group of youth approached and opened fire. Christopher was hit twice in the abdomen.

His friends carried him nearly 100 yards to the bottom of the entrance ramp to the hospital where one of them ran inside asking for help. Two policemen came out to check on Sercye's condition, and found him bleeding heavily. One cop went back inside the hospital, explained the situation to the emergency room staff, and asked for aid, only to be refused.

Ravenswood, a privately owned, for-profit institution, prohibits medical personnel from leaving the facility to provide treatment. Hospital officials said they would call for an EMS ambulance to transport the youth to a trauma center at another hospital.

The hospital even refused to provide a gurney so that the policemen could bring the shooting victim inside. Eventually they found a wheelchair, lifted the unconscious boy into it, and pushed him up the ramp into the emergency room. By then, however, too much time and too much blood had been lost, and he died less than 90 minutes after the shooting. Sercye had been kept waiting outside the Ravenswood emergency room for a total of 10 minutes, time which was critical in a life-or-death situation.

The private, profit-making character of Ravenswood contributed to this needless death. But the callousness displayed at the emergency room door goes beyond the cold-blooded calculation of a particular business enterprise. This gruesome incident says a great deal about the coarsening of human relations and the general

devaluation of human life that have become ever more pervasive features of American society.



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