

COVID patient in California dies after maggots found in mouth and nose

Brian Dixon

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A woman recovering from COVID-19 at South Coast Global Medical Center located in Santa Ana passed away only days after family members found her in a state of neglect, discovering maggots in her mouth and nose.

The 65-year-old woman, Concepcion Covarrubias, was taken to the hospital on July 7, 2020, as she struggled with COVID-19.

She eventually recovered and finally tested negative for COVID-19 at the end of July. Her children then asked that Covarrubias be moved to a rehabilitation center, a request that was denied.

Subsequently, the woman's infection levels increased and her hospital room was left in unacceptable conditions.

Covarrubias's son and daughter were finally able to visit in person, where they held a video call with their sister that captured the scene. It was clear that the mother was in pain. As the children recorded the call, they discovered numerous maggots in the mother's mouth and nose. Covarrubias later passed away on August 21, 2020.

"They told us, it must have been a fly that basically got in her nose and left droppings there," the woman's daughter, Carolina Mijango, told NBC Los Angeles. "That lack of care killed her."

The woman's family is now suing the hospital, alleging elder abuse, negligence and wrongful death. According to nurse notes at the time and cited in the filed complaint, "two or possibly three dozen maggots started coming out of the patient's right nares."

The family also claims that the room was unclean, the nasogastric tube was not cleansed, and that staff skipped her diabetes treatment.

The South Coast Global Medical Center is one of seven full-service acute hospitals in Southern

California owned by KPC Group, which, according to its website, has \$10 billion in assets.

Such negligence and unnecessary death, which has characterized the entire pandemic, is a direct product of the subordination of every aspect of life, including the delivery of health care, to the need for profit under capitalism.

After initially being forced by workers to impose a limited shutdown, the ruling class has subsequently allowed the disease to rip through the population as part of a strategy of herd immunity designed to keep workers on the job, no matter how unsafe, to ensure that they continue to pump out profits for the financial oligarchy.

Hospitals and treatment facilities, both for-profit and so-called "non-profit," have fired and laid off workers during the pandemic, despite the increasing need for more nurses and health care workers. Moreover, health care giants have refused to improve staffing levels, putting both patients and staff at greater risk and, ultimately, leading to tragic cases of death and neglect, such as that suffered by Covarrubias. Even in California where state law mandates specific nurse staffing levels, the state government simply waived the mandate when it became an inconvenience.

Safe staffing levels have been at the center of the numerous struggles by nurses and other health care workers over the course of the past year, such as those at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts, Mercy Hospital in Buffalo, New York, and at various Kaiser facilities on the West Coast and in Georgia. However, the fight to achieve safe working conditions, among other demands, has been undermined by the trade unions that supposedly represent these workers. This was most recently seen at Kaiser hospitals on the West Coast, where a coalition of unions called off a

strike just days before it was scheduled and are now seeking to impose a tentative agreement that fails to seriously address any of the workers' demands.

The safety of both patients and nurses depends on health care workers breaking from the trade unions, forming independent rank-and-file committees to lead their struggles, and challenging the capitalist system as a whole, which reduces even the life-and-death matters of health care to the drive to accumulate profit.



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