

Statement regarding Mr. Walter Williams

Patient at UMMC Holmes County Hospital

Feb. 28, 2014

Mr. Walter Williams, a Lexington resident receiving home-hospice care for end-stage cardiovascular disease and multiple underlying ailments, arrived at the UMMC Holmes County Hospital Emergency Department at 12:40 a.m. Thursday.

Several hours earlier he had been pronounced dead at home by a coroner and was brought to a Lexington-area funeral home. At the funeral home Mr. Williams was found moving and breathing and was transported by ambulance to Holmes County Hospital.

Upon arrival Mr. Williams exhibited shallow and extremely slow breathing and a weak, thready pulse.

Emergency department staff also found Mr. Williams was severely hypoglycemic and administered dextrose and saline to increase his low blood sugar. Staff then admitted him to the hospital for observation.

Although his prognosis is poor, due to underlying medical conditions, Mr. Williams was listed in fair condition as of 6 p.m. Friday.

Physicians at Holmes County Hospital confirm it is possible that Mr. Williams' severe hypoglycemia, combined with medications administered during hospice care, may have made him so somnolent late Wednesday night that he appeared to have passed away.

Mr. Williams has a defibrillator and pacemaker, which would have continued operating, likely making it difficult to determine cardiac death, leaving his care provider and the coroner to rely only on breathing and pulse assessments.