



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 14, 2011

## Baby Joseph Transferred to U.S. Hospital

The frightening story of the dying one-year-old Canadian child, Joseph Maraachli, better known as Baby Joseph, has captured the hearts of Americans as the baby's family struggled to maintain authority over the child after a Canadian court ruled that doctors should remove the baby's ventilator against his parents' wishes.



While the family was currently pursuing a life or death appeal of that controversial decision with Ontario's highest court, they received some good news: An American hospital accepted Baby Joseph's [transfer](#) request and will be providing further treatment to the child as a result of the determined efforts of Priests for Life.

[Life Site News](#) explains the dire straits of the child's condition: "Joseph suffers from a severe neurological disorder, but his specific condition remains undiagnosed. The Maraachli's daughter Zina died from similar complications eight years ago, but in that case they took her home after doctors performed a tracheotomy."

According to Dr. Paul Byrne, a veteran in the field of neonatology, the same procedure should have been performed on Joseph "a long time ago." Byrne added that he has never seen a need to remove a child's ventilator. "If a baby has a disease process that's so bad that they're going to die, then they die on the ventilator anyway."

[The Times Colonists](#) reports, "The baby's parents believe removing the tube would cause him to choke and die violently. They want Joseph to receive a tracheotomy, which would open his airways and allow him to die at home."

But no doctors have been willing to perform the procedure on the sickly child. Recently, Baby Joseph's family suffered further disappointment when they were denied a transfer to a Michigan hospital to undergo a tracheotomy.

Fortunately, through the tireless efforts of Father Frank Pavone and the Priests for Life staff, Joseph Maraachli is on route to SSM Cardinal Glennon Children's Medical Center in St. Louis, Missouri, a non-profit healthcare facility for children.

Father Pavone urged Priests for Life supporters in an email, "What I need you to do right now is to contact by email...the attending physician for Baby Joseph at the Canadian hospital. It is our understanding that he has the ultimate authority to permit the release of Baby Joseph or to deny it. In other words, the fate of Baby Joseph is in [the doctor's] hands. We all must urge the doctor to do the right thing and allow Baby Joseph to get the care he can receive in the U.S. hospital which we've already lined up and is ready to go."

The London Health Sciences Centre reported their [consent](#) to the transfer in a late night email, which



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indicated that the transfer was done against “the strongest possible medical advice” of the hospital.

The email continued, “His parents exercised their legal right to have him discharged after LHSC exhausted all its legal options in attempting to deliver Baby Joseph the best possible and most appropriate medical care.”

It added that the transfer and further care of the child “will be paid for by U.S. interests and not by LHSC.”

The transfer and treatment of the baby is in fact being paid for by Priests for Life. According to Father Pavone, the cost for the transfer alone is thousands of dollars an hour, while the cost for Baby Joseph’s hospital stay could reach as high as \$150,000.

Bob Davidson, spokesman for the Missouri hospital to which Baby Joseph has been transferred, remarked, “Our physicians are examining Joseph to determine the best course of action.”

A statement issued by Fr. Pavone reads, “Priests for Life staff toiled through the night for many nights, working in concert with dozens of people to make this possible. Now that we have won the battle against the medical bureaucracy in Canada, the real work of saving Baby Joseph can begin.”

On [February 17](#), Ontario Superior Court Justice Helen Rady ruled in support of baby Joseph’s doctor’s decision to take Joseph off life support, a ruling that the family is contesting. Justice Rady’s decision was grounded in medical testimony that the child is in a permanent vegetative state, though the family contested the claim indicating that the child reacts to tickling.

Even worse, the Superior Court rejected an appeal by the parents to bring the child home, where he can die under the care of his parents.

Reacting to that decision, Joseph’s father Mike said, “They will kill my baby. There’s no more humanity. There’s no more chance. I’ve tried everything for him. No more appeals, nothing.”

After the February 17 ruling, London Health Sciences Centre, the hospital wherein Joseph was being treated, was poised to remove the ventilator on February 21, but opted against it when the family’s previous lawyer, Mark Handelman, pointed out that the family could still refuse. The day was celebrated as Family Day.

The Maraachli family secured Windsor lawyer Claudio Martini to represent the family in their [appeal](#). “I’ve been retained to file an appeal to the notice of appeal to the decision of the superior court,” said Martini, who failed the appeal shortly after being retained.

In addition to Martini, the family also retained the efforts of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), a constitutional law firm, who also helped to explore the possibilities of acquiring treatment for the child in the United States.

For weeks, Priests for Life maintained a prepared jet set to fly the baby and his family to whichever hospital in the United States that would accept the task. Initially, Priests for Life National Director, Father Frank Pavone, revealed that Michigan physicians agreed to oversee the child’s outpatient care and help wean him off of the ventilator.

The London Health Sciences Centre had received a written request from the Michigan hospital “to review Baby Joseph Maraachli’s medical information regarding the feasibility and appropriateness of a potential patient transfer.”

The statement issued by the Michigan hospital indicated, “Our focus at this time is to work with the



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family on a patient care plan and to continue to provide compassionate and dignified care and comfort to Baby Joseph.”

However, the Michigan hospital since then denied the transfer for the child to undergo the tracheotomy.

The transfer to the Missouri hospital has come just in time, as the Canadian hospital wherein Baby Joseph was being treated already requested Ontario’s Office of the Public Guardian to step in and allow them to remove Joseph’s ventilator, since the parents continue to refuse to give their consent to do so.

According to Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, the Canadian court’s decision is a dangerous one as it provides authority to the doctors to make life and death decisions on their patients. Schadenberg asserts that such a system is worse than the “death panels” recently instated in the United States under Obamacare.

“It’s the hospitals and the doctors once again usurping their power over the people,” said Schadenberg. “That’s what’s happening. And they have significant power-they have the money and the courts behind them. It’s absolutely ridiculous.”

The Maraachli family’s struggle has pulled at the heartstrings of the American people. A Facebook [page](#) entitled “Save Baby Joseph” has already managed to garner the support of 14,000 people.

*Photo: “[Save Baby Joseph](#)” Facebook page*



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