

Amish Girl Ordered to Resume Chemotherapy Despite Pleas of Parents

An Ohio hospital can force a 10-year-old Amish girl with leukemia to resume chemotherapy over the protests of her parents who decided to stop treatment, an appeals court ruled.

Akron Children's Hospital asked the judge to appoint a guardian for the girl after doctors became worried when her parents stopped treatment in June after only one of five prescribed rounds of chemotherapy.

Her family was told that the girl has an 85 percent survival rate with treatment but would die within the year if she does not receive it.

Maria Schimer, a lawyer and a former nurse, is expected to be appointed the medical guardian for the girl, according to the ruling released on Friday.

The girl has only been identified by her initials, S.H.

"Parental rights, even if based upon firm belief and honest convictions can be limited in order to protect the 'best interests' of the child," the court wrote in its ruling.

The girl and her parents decided to end her chemotherapy in exchange for "natural medicines" after the child's first round of chemotherapy made her very ill.

"They do not wish to subject their daughter to this and believe the will of God will triumph," said John Oberholtzer, the family's lawyer in August.

The court ruling appointing a guardian reverses a lower court decision. Medina County Judge John Lohn had twice denied the

limited medical guardianship request by Schimer.

“A parent’s right to make medical decisions for a child is an important incident of parenthood, subject to broad protection the Constitution,” Lohn wrote in his Sept. 3 ruling.

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