

Hospital: State policy on mentally ill 'misguided'

May 12 2016



Taunton, Mass., Mayor Thomas Hoyer, Jr., right, speaks about Tuesday's stabbings at a Taunton home and shopping mall, Wednesday, May 11, 2016, in Fall River, Mass. Behind him are Taunton Police Chief Edward Walsh, left, and Bristol County District Attorney Thomas Quinn III. Arthur DaRosa, described by his family as mentally disturbed, went on a stabbing rampage hours after leaving a hospital. He killed two people and assaulted and stabbed others before being fatally shot by an off-duty sheriff's deputy at the Silver City Galleria mall. (Jack Foley/The Herald News of Fall River via AP)

The Massachusetts hospital under scrutiny for releasing a man who hours later fatally stabbed two people and injured several others says state policy that governs the way it handles psychiatric patients is "misguided."

The family of Arthur DaRosa says he was depressed and suicidal when he was admitted to Morton Hospital in Taunton on Monday evening. He was released Tuesday morning and hours later fatally stabbed an 80-year-old woman in her home and a 56-year-old teacher dining out with his wife.

Morton spokeswoman Julie Masci said in a statement the hospital is barred by federal law from acknowledging patient names or disclosing patient information.

But the statement outlined what the hospital said is state policy on handling mentally ill patients on Medicaid.

"Morton Hospital has been advocating for years that the state review and revise its policies that require outside third-party vendors to evaluate and determine the course of treatment for Medicaid patients in emergency departments," the statement read.

"As we have said in the past, the current policy mandating that the evaluation process must be carried out by a third party state contractor is misguided."

Hospitals should be allowed to have their own psychiatrists and clinicians assess patients, Masci said.

The statement said it had psychiatric beds available on Monday.

"If the state contracted agency responsible for conducting evaluations in

the emergency department had requested an admission to a psychiatric bed, there were beds available within the hospital's network," it said.

DaRosa's aunt, Liz DaRosa said the killings could have been prevented had the [hospital](#) kept her nephew longer rather than discharging him.

Arthur DaRosa left his daughter's soccer practice on Tuesday evening, crashed his car, then entered a home at random and stabbed two women, Bristol District Attorney Thomas Quinn III said. Patricia Slavin, 80, later died.

He then drove to the Silver City Galleria mall several miles away, and stabbed two people in a Bertucci's restaurant, Quinn said.

George Heath, 56, a high school visual arts teacher, was stabbed trying to defend a waitress, and later died.

DaRosa was shot and killed by off-duty Plymouth County Sheriff's Deputy James Creed.

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