

# Dramatic 911 tape reveals dispatcher's fight to save patient; nurse refuses to help; Link here to hear the tape

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 [Glenwood Gardens 911 call, Feb 26, 2013 \(10.0MB\)](#)

BAKERSFIELD, CA - The administrator of Bakersfield's Glenwood Gardens confirmed Friday the retirement facility has a policy: Employees do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation on residents of Glenwood's independent living facility. That's why a nurse refused the pleas of a Bakersfield Fire Department dispatcher to begin CPR on a Glenwood resident who collapsed Tuesday morning.

The 87-year-old woman died. Reports identify her as Lorraine Bayless and confirm she did not have a do-not-resuscitate order. Her daughter told 17News she is satisfied with Glenwood's handling of the situation.

Bayless was a resident at Glenwood Gardens' independent living facility, an area adjacent to, but separate from, Glenwood's skilled nursing facility and assisted living facility.

She collapsed in the facility's dining room at about 11:07 a.m. Tuesday.

Someone called 9-1-1, and Bakersfield Fire Dispatcher Tracey Halvorson got the call. Glenwood Gardens personnel handed the phone to a nurse who identified herself as Colleen.

During a 7-minute, 16-second call, Halvorson reasoned, cajoled and at times begged the nurse to start CPR in an attempt to save the woman.

The nurse said Glenwood Gardens policy prohibited her attempting CPR. The dispatcher assured the nurse Glenwood couldn't be sued if anything went wrong with CPR. The local emergency medical system "Takes the liability for this call," the dispatcher said.

"I understand if your boss is telling you you can't do it," the dispatcher said. "But ... as a human being ... you know ... is there anybody that's willing to help this lady and not let her die?"

"Not at this time," the nurse answered.

Later: "Is there a gardener? Any staff ... anyone who doesn't work for you? Anywhere? Can we flag someone down in the street and get them to help this lady? Can we flag a stranger down? I bet a stranger would help her."

But no one did, until the fire department arrived. Bayless died at Mercy Southwest Hospital.

Jeffrey Toomer, executive director at Glenwood, told Channel 17's Kelsey Thomas the actions were consistent with company policy: Staff does not attempt CPR in the independent living facility.

Unlike the skilled nursing facility and assisted living facility, the independent section does not offer medical help, he said, and its clients know that.

He refused to speak specifically about Tuesday's incident, declining to explain why there apparently was a nurse present when Bayless collapsed.

He refused to provide a copy of Glenwood's policy.

He did provide a written statement. It said:

"First and foremost, we extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to this individual's family on the passing of their loved one.

"We also appreciate the assistance of emergency personnel who arrived immediately to assist in rendering first aid.

 [Fire department releases dramatic 911 call](#)

"In the event of a health emergency at this independent living community, our practice is to immediately call emergency medical personnel for assistance and to wait with the individual needing attention until such personnel arrives.

"That is the protocol we followed.

"As with any incident involving a resident, we will conduct a thorough internal review of this matter, but we have no further comments at this time."

An audio file containing the complete 911 call is attached.

Here is a transcript of the last three minutes of that call.

Dispatcher: We need to get CPR started

Nurse: Yeah, we can't do CPR

Dispatcher: Then hand the phone to the passerby. If you can't do it, I need, hand the phone to the passerby, I'll have her do it. Or if you've got any civic citizens there, I'll have them do it.

Nurse: No, no, it's not ...

Dispatcher: Anybody there can do CPR. Give them the phone, please. I understand if your facility is not willing to do that. Give the phone to that passerby, that stranger ... this woman is not breathing enough. She's going to die if we don't get this started. Do you understand?

Nurse: I understand. I am a nurse. But I cannot have our other senior citizens who don't know CPR do it...

Dispatcher: I will instruct them.

Nurse: we're in a dining room ...

Dispatcher: I will instruct them. Is there anyone there who will ...

Nurse: I can't do that ...

Dispatcher: Okay. I don't understand why you're not willing to help this patient

Nurse: I am but, I'm just saying that ...

Dispatcher: Okay, I'll walk you through it all. We, EMS takes the liability for this, Colleen. I'm happy to help you. This is EMS protocol.

At this point, the nurse asks someone else to get a supervisor. She is heard telling someone else at Glenwood Gardens, "Can you get (unintelligible) ... right away. I don't know where he is. But she's yelling at me and saying we have to have one of our other residents perform CPR. I'm feeling stressed and I'm not going to do that, make that call."

Dispatcher: Colleen, is there anybody who works there who is willing do to it?

Nurse: We can't do that. That's what I'm trying to say.

Dispatcher: Are we just going to let this lady die?

Nurse: That's why we're calling 9-1-1.

Dispatcher: We can't wait. She can't wait right now. She is stopping breathing. She can't wait for them to get there.

Nurse: She's taken three breaths.

Dispatcher: It's not enough. We need to get CPR started.

Nurse: He's saying we don't. So you can talk to my boss. I don't know what to say.

Dispatcher, to another dispatcher: They're refusing CPR. They're going let her die. By the facility. Yeah.

Nurse: When will the fire department be here? When will the ambulance be here?

Dispatcher: They're coming as quick ... they've been on the way all this time. But we can't wait. This lady is going to die.

Nurse: Yeah.

Dispatcher: Well, if you get anybody, any stranger that happens to walk by, who is willing to help ... I understand if your boss is telling you you can't do it. But if there's any ... it's a human being. I don't, you know ... is there anybody that's willing to help this lady and not let her die?

Nurse: Not at this time.

Dispatcher, to another dispatcher: No. They won't touch her at all. I can't get them to touch her at all.

Nurse: We have residents that are her age or older.

Dispatcher: Any guests? Any guests that are there that are willing to help?

Nurse: No, I don't have any.

Dispatcher: Is there a gardener? Any staff ... anyone who doesn't work for you anywhere? Can we flag someone down in the street and get them to help this lady. Can we flag a stranger down? I bet a stranger would help her. I'm pretty good at talking them into it. If you can flag a stranger down, I will help, I will tell them how to help her.

Nurse: He said not to move her.

Dispatcher: Okay. Has anyone gone to look for a stranger?

At this point, the ambulance and fire crews arrive and the tape ends.

Bayless died Tuesday at Mercy Hospital Southwest. Toomer told 17 News that is the policy of Glenwood Gardens that staff does not attempt CPR. Toomer said residents are made aware of this policy when they move into the building.

Bayless did not live in a nursing facility. She lived in the independent living facility where there are no nurses on staff to provide assistance, according to Toomer. It's somewhat of an apartment complex for seniors.

There was a nurse on scene after Bayless collapsed. Toomer wouldn't explain that to 17 News. He also wouldn't give us a copy of the facility's policy.

We also spoke to Bayless' daughter. She said she is a nurse and she remains satisfied with the care her mother received at Glenwood Gardens.

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