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Girl dies after medication error

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Alicia Coleman was born relatively healthy, her mother said, even though she was three months' premature and weighed little more than 2 pounds at birth.

Things grew worse when Alicia came down with a bowel infection at 12 days old. The infection quickly spread through her intestinal tract and wreaked havoc on her tiny body.

Alicia's doctors initially gave her a 5 percent chance of survival, said her mother, Dominique Coleman.

Yet Alicia fought through 15 surgical procedures and the battery of medications that marked the first year of her life. She improved to the point where doctors wanted to wean her off her medications. She was learning how to walk.

"We were very optimistic," said Coleman, 26, of Omaha.

The 19-month-old child suddenly died Saturday while in the care of Children's Home Healthcare's World, a pediatric care center at 7815 Farnam Drive.

Coleman and hospital authorities said medical staff erroneously injected some of Alicia's medication into a catheter connected to her jugular vein.

The infant was struck by a seizure and stopped breathing, forcing rescuers to perform CPR as they rushed her to the emergency department at Children's Hospital & Medical Center. She died after doctors spent an hour trying to revive her, her mother said.

Alicia's death was at least the second associated with a medication-related error in the city in recent months. In early April, Nebraska Medical Center officials attributed the death of a 23-month-old girl to an overdose of blood thinner.

"One minute I'm fine, the next minute I'm crying," Coleman said Sunday. "I really don't know how to start thinking about what life is like without her.

"That was my purpose in life, to be her mom."

Children's Home Healthcare's World is operated by Children's Hospital & Medical Center. The facility, according to its website, is the area's only full-service home health care agency focused exclusively on pediatric patients.

In a statement, Children's officials confirmed that Alicia's seizure occurred after medication was "improperly routed into the child's system."

"Children's Hospital & Medical Center and Children's Home Healthcare's World share deepest condolences with the child's family," hospital officials said. "Words fail us at a time like this. Nothing can adequately express the sadness surrounding the loss of a child."

Coleman knows the feeling. Alicia was her third child, she said. The first two were stillborn.

"She was my last hope," Coleman said. "She's made it through so many things and she bounced back, and for something stupid to take her so fast"

Coleman's voice trailed away for a moment, then she said: "I guess I feel cheated."

This report includes material from the Associated Press.

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