

Unprotected People #98 Influenza

The Story of Amanda Kanowitz

The Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) publishes Unprotected People Reports about people who have suffered or died from vaccine-preventable diseases. This is the 98th in our series.

Families Fighting Flu (FFF) was established in the memory of the children who die each year from the complications of influenza. FFF member families have experienced first-hand the severity of influenza in a child, with many of the members having suffered the devastating loss of an infant, child, or teen. The mission of the non-profit organization, which is made up of families and healthcare professionals, is to reduce pediatric deaths due to influenza by raising awareness about the importance of annual influenza vaccination for children. The following report is reprinted courtesy of Families Fighting Flu.

On the morning of Saturday, February 28, 2004, 4½-year-old Amanda Kanowitz developed a cough and a mild fever. She stayed home and spent the day playing her favorite games with her family. The next morning, she began vomiting, but appeared to have nothing more than a typical virus.

By Sunday evening, Amanda appeared weak and her lips started to look gray. Amanda's mother called the

family doctor, who told her that she had received over 60 calls that weekend about the same virus, and that Amanda would be okay as long as she stayed hydrated. The doctor recommended that Amanda only drink several sips of water at a time, and that her parents should make sure she continued to urinate.

At 3:30 a.m., Amanda woke her parents because she was concerned that she had drank an entire cup of water, instead of just taking sips. She then told them she had a stomachache and urinated in the bathroom.

Just four hours later, at 7:30 a.m., Amanda's parents found her lifeless in her bed.

To honor Amanda's memory, the Kanowitz family has established the Amanda Kanowitz Foundation, which is focusing on research to identify which other children should be considered high-risk for such sudden, extreme reactions to the flu and other infectious diseases.

For more information, please visit www.amandakfoundation.org and www.familiesfightingflu.org