

## Why We Should Care About Charlie Gard

Do you know who Charlie Gard is? This 11-month old baby's story has captivated the world. He was born perfectly healthy. After noticing weakness, his parents took him to the hospital when he was eight weeks old and have not been back home since. Baby Charlie eventually needed a ventilator to breathe. He has an ultra-rare genetic disorder – he's only the 16<sup>th</sup> person in the world ever reported to have it.

Charlie's heart wrenching story is now known worldwide. He has been offered help from the two most powerful men in the world, Pope Francis and President Donald Trump. His parents raised over a million dollars to bring him to America for experimental treatment but the hospital refused to allow it.



At the behest of the hospital, the British government revoked parental rights from his mother and father and, against their wishes, obtained approval to end Charlie's life. The absurdly named "European Court of Human Rights" upheld Charlie's death sentence.

As of this writing, the hospital has refused offers of outside assistance from the Vatican children's hospital and a New York hospital, which even offered to send them the experimental medicine. Even more distressing is that the hospital has refused to allow Charlie's parents to bring him home to die.

Single-payer government health insurance, such as exists in Britain and being proposed by some in the USA, will forever be grounded in cost-savings over compassion for the human person. Only if individual patients and doctors control healthcare, not faceless nameless government bureaucrats, will it include compassion and respect for the sanctity of human life.

Wesley J. Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute Center on Human Exceptionalism and a consultant to the Patients' Rights Council raised an important point in an article for National Right to Life. He wrote, "The refusal to allow Charlie's parents to remove their baby boy from the hospital is an act of bioethical aggression that will extend futile-care controversies, creating a duty to die at the time and place of doctors' choosing. And that raises a crucial liberty question: Whose baby is Charlie Gard? His parents'? Or are sick babies—and others facing futile-care impositions—ultimately owned by the hospital and the state?"

*S. O'Brien, Pro-Life Ministry*