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HealthWatch

'Destiny' Gets Treatment Thanks To NBC 10



Cherie Bank, NBC 10 Medical Reporter

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Complicated insurance rules can make it difficult to control your own destiny in a medical crisis.

The family of a critically ill Delaware girl whose name is Destiny claims she was denied lifesaving care until NBC 10 medical reporter Cherie Bank stepped in.



"She was just the best little baby you could ever have, a very healthy child," said Destiny's mother, Shelly.

But last year when she was two, Destiny's speech started to slur, and she began to lose her balance.

Doctors discovered destiny had a brain tumor, a cancerous one, that was already the size of a plum.

This is Destiny today, after two brain operations, chemotherapy and a stem-cell transplant. Through it all, Destiny's remained a happy child.

"You know what I am - the bravest and the smartest and the brave(st) little girl you know," Destiny said when she met Cherie.

There are no treatments left for little Destiny now, except one. The directors of Duke University's brain tumor center believe they have a drug that could help save her life if given right away. It is her only hope.

But in early May, when Shelly asked destiny's insurance provider, Delaware's First State Health Plan, to cover the treatment, they said no.

"I don't understand how they could deny a child a chance at life," Shelly said.

Then, in an e-mail obtained by NBC 10 News, the insurance company wrote to Duke on May 27th that "the treat-

ment has been denied due to the experimental nature of the treatment."

Desperate, the Bergs contacted NBC 10. And NBC 10 called a nationwide company that's expert in handling problems like this called Health Advocate.

Health Advocate is a service sold to employers to help their employees navigate the insurance and healthcare system. NBC 10 asked it to look into destiny's denial.

"When we looked at Destiny's case we knew immediately that the health plan was denying services that they should have covered," said Health Advocate's Kelly Johnston.



"She was eligible for them. She was entitled to them. And we wanted to make sure she got them."

Johnston and others at Health Advocate say they spent five days fighting to convince First State not to do something special for Destiny, just to give her what they believe she deserves under her insurance plan.

And finally, they did.

First State, which was not available for an on camera interview, says they never stopped fighting for Destiny.

So within the week, Shelly takes her daughter to Duke where everyone hopes doctors and new drugs will bring new life to her destiny.