

# Patient Wakes Up As Doctors Get Ready To Remove Organs

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It was exactly midnight when Caroline Burns eerily opened her eyes and looked at the operating lights above her, shocking doctors who believed she was dead and were about to remove her organs and donate them to patients on the transplant waiting list.

The [Syracuse Post-Standard](#) [1] unearthed a [report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) [2] that chronicled the series of errors that led to the near-organ removal on a living patient at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse, N.Y., in 2009.

"The patient did not suffer a cardiopulmonary arrest (as documented) and did not have irreversible brain damage," the HHS report concluded. "The patient did not meet criteria for withdrawal of care."

According to the report, doctors had inaccurately diagnosed Burns with irreversible brain damage and ignored nurses who'd noticed signs that Burns was improving: She curled her toes when touched, flared her nostrils and moved her mouth and tongue. She was also breathing on her own even though she was on a respirator.

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<http://www.surgicalproductsmag.com/articles/2013/07/patient-wakes-doctors-get-ready-remove-organs>

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[1] [http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/07/st\\_joes\\_fined\\_over\\_dead\\_patient.html](http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2013/07/st_joes_fined_over_dead_patient.html)

[2] <http://www.scribd.com/doc/148583905/U-S-Centers-for-Medicare-and-Medicaid-Services-report-on-St-Joe-s>

[3] <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/patient-wakes-doctors-remove-organs/story?id=19609438#.UdwN9flz4Y4>