Policy Makes Lung Transplant Out Of Reach For 10-Year-Old

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If Sarah Murnaghan were 12 years old, she would be at the top of the adult lung transplant list because she only has weeks to live and a lung transplant would as-good-as cure her of cystic fibrosis.

But she's not 12, and if she doesn't get new lungs, she might not even make it to 11.

"We are not asking for preference for Sarah, we are asking for equality," Sarah's mother, Janet Murnaghan, said in a press release. "We strongly believe Sarah should be triaged based on the severity of her illness, not her age."

The Murnaghan family of Newrown, Pa., is fighting a little known organ transplant policy that is effectively pushing 10-year-old Sarah to the bottom of the adult transplant waiting list because it mandates that adult lungs be offered to all adult patients before they can be offered to someone under 12 years old.

Sarah has been on the pediatric waiting list for new lungs for 18 months, but since there are so few pediatric organ donors, there hasn't been a match. She's been living at Philadelphia Children's Hospital for two months connected to a machine to help her breath, Sarah's aunt, Sharon Ruddock, told ABCNews.com.

There were only 11 lung donors between 6 and 10 years old and only two lung transplants in that age group in 2012, according to an Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network statement.

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