

Brazil Court Takes Anorexic Girl from Parents to Force Feed Her in Hospital

Contributed by Elma Lia Nascimento
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A 15-year-old Brazilian aspiring model with an anorexia eating disorder has been forced by a judge to enter a hospital where she is being forcefully fed. The court order was signed by judge Valter Ribeiro Júnior from Bahia state's Child and Youth Court.

The girl has been admitted to the São Mateus hospital, in Feira de Santana, a town with a little over half a million people, 70 miles from Salvador, the Bahia capital. The teenager had been receiving medical treatment for three months at the Caps (Child-Youth Psychosocial Care Center).

Hospital data show that the teen, who is 1.57m (5'2") tall, had been admitted to the Youth Center with 39 kg (86 lb) and despite being treated at home lost 4kg (9 lbs). According to the doctors, her health had deteriorated last week and she was running the risk of dying if she continued at her parents home.

It was the health team in charge of the girl's care who decided to file a suit in court to assure that the patient be taken to a hospital since her parents refused to allow this to happen.

"We got to a point where she was suffering serious clinical complications, which could lead to her death. That's when we contacted the Child and Youth Court and the justice to help us," explained Ribevânia Cunha, the center coordinator.

The treatment is being overseen by a medical team that includes a gastroenterologist and a nutritionist.

Judge Costa Júnior justified his action: "We issued a warrant on behalf of the principles of life and health, which we should guarantee children and teenagers by placing them safely far from any risk situation."

The judge told reporters this Thursday, June 7, that he will wait till next week to study the medical reports and then decide whether the girl parents should be charged with negligence regarding their daughter's health.

The girl's mother, who doesn't wish to give her own name, says that she's furious at the court decision. She revealed that the daughter was forcefully taken to the hospital the day she was celebrating her 15th birthday. The woman said she is thinking about filing an appeal to have her daughter back.

The São Mateus hospital informs that after four days after being admitted to the facility the teen is still being fed through a probe.

On Wednesday, June 6, she was able to eat a piece of chocolate and was transferred from the infirmary to an apartment. The last medical report lists her health condition as stable although their doctors still don't know when she will be released from the hospital.

The teenager dreams of being a model and had been on a diet to get slimmer since the age of 13. She had also bouts of depression, according to relatives.

Her mother told about the daughter's aspirations: "With the Internet and all these things she put in her head that she wanted to be a model. And in the last four months she totally stopped eating."