

Hospital releases wrong body to local funeral home

BY SANDY BATTIN
NEWS-BULLETIN STAFF WRITER

A spokesperson for Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque confirmed Friday that it released the wrong body to a Belen funeral home, which subsequently cremated it.

Erika Campos, the hospital spokesperson, said "what, happened is a hospital employee made the very unfortunate error of not

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following appropriate protocols in releasing two deceased patients to a local funeral home.

"The result was that Mary Calles was sent to Romero Funeral Home and ...she was ... cremated.

We made the errors of sending the wrong deceased patient to the wrong home."

Bill Dorman, a chaplain at the hospital, said, in a statement)

"We're extremely sorry and we wish to offer our deepest apologies to both families. We have a procedure regarding releasing patients to funeral homes that doesn't appear to have been followed.

"We know that mere words cannot undo an error and there's no excuse for what happened."

The Calles family couldn't be reached for comment.

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Dorman said the hospital has taken steps to ensure such an incident will never happen again.

"We understand that the family is extremely distressed and that her funeral is not what they would have wanted," Dorman said. "We have offered whatever help and support we can give including paying for any and all funeral expenses."

He said the hospital is remaining in close contact with the Calles family.

Dicky Romero, owner of Romero Funeral Home in Belen, said "Romero Funeral Home wishes to express their deepest sympathy for the family of Maryann Calles. The unfortunate events that transpired this week should have never happened. Romero Funeral Home states that all of their documents regarding this case indicate that all proper procedures involved with removing, holding and cremating a remains were followed.

"When dealing with a large institution, such as a hospital, the funeral home has to rely on the release procedures dictated by hospital policy. In this case, these procedures appeared to be completely in place. Romero Funeral Home had no reason to believe they were not."

Romero said his business "will continue to provide the same conscientious service to the families of Belen and Valencia County that they hve provided for over 63 years."