Prince George's man declared dead a day too soon by medics

By Sholnn Freeman

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The daughter of a Prince George's County man who was mistakenly left for dead by paramedics Friday said she and her mother had already notified relatives when she learned from a medical examiner that he was, in fact, alive.

George Waters, 70, ultimately died Saturday evening at Prince George's Hospital Center, according to his daughter, Laverne Waters.

"Now I'm going through the emotions again," Waters said Saturday in a hospital hallway, hours before her father died. "I wouldn't wish that on anyone, to go through what I went through yesterday."

The county fire and emergency medical services department said the two paramedics who responded to the call are on "limited public contact status," which bars them from responding to emergency calls. The department has said an investigation is under way.

Laverne Waters said she got a call at work 11:15 a.m. Friday from her father's apartment complex notifying her that he was dead. Ten minutes later, she said, Glenarden police told her to come to the scene.

Waters said her father lived alone. She was too distraught to drive, she said, so a co-worker drove her and stopped on the way to pick up her mother. They arrived about 1 p.m.

Less than an hour later, Waters was in the rental office when Glenarden Police Chief Phillip O'Donnell and a representative of the state medical examiner's office arrived to tell her that her father was alive. "I just couldn't believe it," she said.

Waters said O'Donnell apologized and promised to address the issue. Glenarden police said Saturday that O'Donnell was not available to comment.

Waters said she and her mother had notified the entire family of her father's death through calls and e-mails.
"The family shouldn't be traumatized twice," she said. "We had to call everybody back."

According to the county fire and emergency medical services department, the paramedics - described as a veteran firefighter and paramedic and a longtime firefighter who just completed an internship to become a full-fledged paramedic - were called to an apartment in the 8600 block of Glenarden Parkway to assist police at the scene of a possible death at noon Friday. Mark E. Brady, a department spokesman, had said that the paramedics "concurred" that Waters was dead.

Waters said both should be fired.

"I'm trying to figure out why the EMS didn't check his vital signs," she said.

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