

# Florida Couple Loses Custody of Sons After Seeking Diagnosis From Boston Children's Hospital

PREMIUM

US FEATURES



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Nov 4 2022

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Michael Seklecki, 5, and Noah Seklecki, 3, eating ice just an hour before they were taken by the Massachusetts Department of Children's Services on a report of medical abuse by Boston Children's Hospital. (Courtesy of family)

A Florida couple is embroiled in a state custody battle initiated by Boston Children's Hospital in a case reminiscent of the highly publicized story of Justina Pelletier, the 15-year-old teen who was whisked away by 10 security guards after the hospital accused her parents of medical abuse.

Michael Seklecki and his wife Samantha Grabowski told The Epoch Times they were blindsided when social workers from the Massachusetts Division of Children and Family showed up along with two police cruisers and took custody of their two sons, Michael, 5, and Noah, 3.

It happened on a summer afternoon on July 7 and now several months later, the couple has yet to have the 72-hour hearing they say they were entitled to following the custody takeover by the state.

Instead, the courts scheduled a permanency hearing for Nov. 9. Like the Pelletiers, the Florida couple stands accused of medical abuse and Munchausen syndrome by proxy, a mental disorder in which caretakers, often parents, fake a person's illness.

The couple and their two sons were visiting family in Massachusetts and had just returned from a trip out for ice cream when police officers and state and child protection workers showed up and snatched up their children, on the basis the boys were in imminent danger.

"They were just gone in minutes," said Seklecki, who along with Grabowski grew up in Massachusetts.

"We are still in a state of shock. How does a family trip turn into a state kidnapping your children?"

The visit was part of a trip the family made to Boston Children's Hospital for help diagnosing 5-year-old Michael's problems with clearing his bowels, something that he suffered from since he was a baby.

After years of running a battery of tests and trying various treatments, the boy's Florida doctors could not come up with a definitive diagnosis.

The medical trips to BCH landed Seklecki and his son Michael in the [national news](#) earlier this year when a federal judge ordered airlines to exempt Michael from mask mandates after they would not let the autistic boy fly without wearing a mask.

As records show, the Florida family first met with a host of BCH doctors and specialists including pediatric gastroenterologist Samuel Nurko, director of motility and functional gastrointestinal disorders, who acted as the lead doctor on the diagnosis and treatment recommendations.

On Feb 16, 2022, following intense genetic testing of the little boy, BCH outlined in a 14-page genetic report its findings that Michael had a rare genetic disorder called Fabry's disease.

Fabry's disease is an inherited, painful disorder involving a missing or faulty enzyme the body relies on to break down fats.

The Fabry diagnosis would mean that Michael would need enzyme replacement therapy for the rest of his life, concluded BCH.

Nurko had initially recommended starting the enzyme replacement therapy right away and also started the boy on two medications that weren't FDA approved, but changed his mind and recommended the boy be initially placed on stool softeners.

BCH also recommended a medication called Gabapentin to treat Michael's pain.

Seklecki and Grabowski told The Epoch Times that they took BCH's recommendations under advisement and headed home to Florida.

As medical reports show, the Florida doctors along with the boy's other doctors disagreed with BCH and felt Michael should be started on the enzyme replacement right away to see if it would help, since the boy was still struggling to eat without vomiting or getting nauseated.

On March 30, a Florida surgeon implanted a catheter to begin the enzyme treatment. One of the family's doctors also prescribed a low dose of morphine after it was found he was responding poorly to the gabapentin suggested by BCH.

Three months later on June 30, the Florida couple attended a virtual follow-up appointment with what Seklecki thought was supposed to be a quick "hi and bye" visit with Nurko. However, Nurko did not like that the couple had followed Florida and other doctor's recommendations over his.

"I told the family that a lot of these interventions are complicated and that we would not have endorsed them and that we need to relook at things, " Nurko wrote in a follow-up to the virtual visit. "We will keep a close follow to decide if further interventions, particularly from social service, may be needed."

Records show that seven days later, Nurko updated his June 30 report on July 7 at 7:09 p.m., about three hours, as intake reports show, after police and social workers showed up at the Southwick home of Michael's parents and took his two boys. Nurko made no mention that he suspected Munchausen syndrome by proxy or medical abuse.

There is no mention in any of BCH's medical records of any concerns about Munchausen syndrome or medical abuse.

A BCH surgeon who saw Michael when the boy was being considered for a surgical procedure, wrote that he is “well appearing” and in “no acute distress.”



Medical workers and police watch as demonstrators in support of trans-children and gender affirmation treatments rally outside of Boston Childrens Hospital in Boston on Sept. 18, 2022.(Joseph Prezioso/AFP via Getty Images)

## 5 Months Later

It would be five months later that the state would take 5-year old Michael and his 3-year old brother Noah. Immediately after taking them, the DCF brought them to Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, where they asked Dr. Stephen Boos, a child abuse expert on staff, to prepare a report based on their concerns.

Boos, who commented on the Pelletier case when it was in the news, wrote that Munchausen by proxy was suspected by BCH, but offered no evidence of it. He also wrote that he believed that the boy's illnesses were real.

Boos includes a garden variety of allegations in his report about Grabowski and Seklecki, ranging from accusing the couple of doctor shopping, to suspecting Michael Seklecki of domestic violence because Grabowski, he wrote, was quiet and didn't express any opinions. Samantha Grabowski told The Epoch Times the allegation “is just ridiculous.”



“My anxiety is through the roof and I’m dealing with people I don’t trust,” she said, “I’m not being quiet, I’m in shock. I’m intimidated by the DCF and Boston Children’s, which since it’s owned by Harvard, I’m also dealing with three huge powers and they are together basically dissecting our whole lives and for what I don’t even know.”

Boos also wrote that the “dad” was suspected of taking Michael’s morphine, but doesn’t say why. Boos made no mention that less than 24 hours after their boys were taken, Seklecki and Grabowski were subject to court-ordered drug tests including specific tests for the presence of morphine and that all the tests were negative.

Boos, who admits in his report that he never met Michael, Noah, or their parents, also writes that he “doubts Mikey has autism.” concluding instead that he probably has “some kind of behavioral disorder.”

## **Before State Took Custody**

Boston Children’s Hospital and its doctors declined to comment on the issue, saying in an email that they “don’t comment on any litigation.”

Boos and the DCF did not respond to multiple inquiries by The Epoch Times.

The Epoch Times was able to make phone contact with Elouise Moore, the state social worker leading the investigation. However, she refused to answer any questions including general inquiries about agency protocols for taking emergency state custody of children, saying she had “no information to share.”

Both BCH and DCF also ignored requests from The Epoch Times for the number of 51As—medical abuse claims—that trigger state custody actions they have processed in the past three years.

In a recent interview with The Epoch Times, Linda Pelletier said she has been contacted by dozens of families over the years whose children were taken into state custody after BCH filed 51A claims against them.

Linda Pelletier said she was not surprised by what happened to the Florida family. Like their son, her daughter also had a rare genetic disorder and like Grabowski and Seklecki, Pelletier said her family’s troubles began when BCH disagreed with another doctor.

Pelletier said her daughter went from skating competitively to being wheelchair-bound after the state took custody of her, as pictures that ran in the media at the time supported. She said her daughter hasn’t been the same since, having just suffered a stroke earlier this year.

Like Grabowski and Seklecti, Linda and Lou Pelletier who were slapped with a sudden array of allegations including Munchausen by proxy and doctor shopping. The couple said none of the claims were ever proven.

The state’s DCF has already opposed a motion filed by Seklecki and Grabowski’s court-appointed attorney to transfer the case to Florida.

As were the Pelletiers, the young Florida couple is now limited to a one-hour supervised visit once a week with their two young children.

It remains unclear why the state took custody of Grabowski and Seklecki’s younger son.

Grabowski told The Epoch Times that a DCF social worker recently told her that they were going to skip over any reunification efforts and go for permanent state ward of the boys.



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