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## Jahi McMath's family is being helped by Terri Schiavo group



Nailah Winkfield, mother of 13-year-old Jahi McMath, is comforted by brother Omari Sealey as she talks to the media outside Children's Hospital Oakland. (Associated Press)

By A TIMES STAFF WRITER



A group linked to the family of Terri Schiavo says it is now working with the family of Jahi McMath over what to do with the 13-year-old girl.

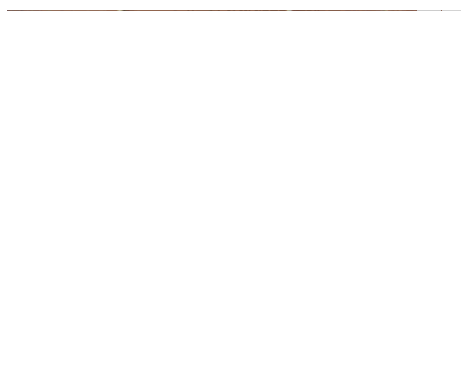
Jahi's family has been trying to find a facility that will take her while at the same time fighting in court to keep her on



consent surgery.

The Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network told the Associated Press Wednesday that it is trying to help the McMath family find a facility for Jahi. Schiavo was at the center of an epic right-to-die debate. She was in a coma for years; her husband had her feeding tube removed in 2005 after a long fight with her parents.

Jahi suffered heavy bleeding, [cardiac arrest](#) and “whole brain death” — defined as an irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain, including the brain stem — on Dec. 12. Two hospital physicians and three outside doctors requested by the family deemed her brain-dead, court records show, and the county coroner was notified. But the family protested the hospital's intention to remove Jahi from a ventilator.



Tests by an independent physician named by the court also determined that the girl is legally dead. They showed no blood flow to the brain, an inability to breathe on her own and no sign of electrical activity.

Her mother disagrees.

“My daughter is breathing,” Nailah Winkfield told reporters Monday after an Alameda County judge issued the temporary restraining order through Jan. 7. “She moves. When I go in there and touch her, she moves her whole body, her legs, her shoulders. How can you possibly say my child is dead if she responds to my voice?”

There is broad medical and legal consensus that whole brain death constitutes one of two legal definitions of death. A [Harvard Medical School](#) panel first put forth the standard in 1968, and in 1981 a presidential council proposed that a uniform statute be adopted nationwide. It was published as the “Uniform Determination of Death Act.”

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Another presidential council reaffirmed in 2008 that “whole brain death” is legal death.

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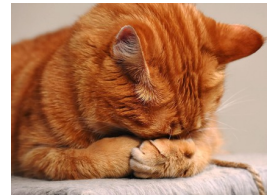
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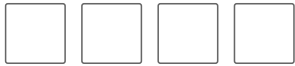
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