

WOMAN WITH BOWEL OBSTRUCTION WAS NOT OPERATED ON FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS

Trust apology for its failings



Solicitor Sarah Harman: 'Donna could have been saved'

THE death of Donna Maben, the mother of a baby son, was entirely avoidable, her family's solicitor said.

Sarah Harman said after the hearing: "There were several occasions when she could have been saved had the appropriate treatment been given over a period of two weeks.

"This was not a sudden death. She was already suffering from a potentially life threatening condition."

But she added: "It was a treatable condition and if she had been treated in time she could have survived and been able to bring up her little baby."

Mrs Maben's son Travis was just seven months old when she died.

Her husband Ian and other family members were too distressed to talk after the inquest.

Coroner Rachel Redman's letter will go to Stuart Bain, the chief executive of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.

A spokesman for the trust said: "The trust apologises unreservedly for Donna's death.

"We fully accept the verdict of the coroner and would like to reassure the public that we have already implemented changes to prevent this happening again.

"The trust sets itself extremely high standards and deeply regrets that these standards were not met on this occasion.

"Once again we would like to offer our sincere condolences to Mr Maben and his family."

Coroner criticises delay in operating on mother



The William Harvey Hospital where Donna Maben died - the coroner is writing to the hospital trust

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SURGEONS failed to operate on a seriously ill young mother for more than two weeks after she was first brought to hospital.

Donna Maben, 33, finally received surgery for a bowel obstruction after she collapsed on a ward but she still died days later.

Now a coroner has criticised the delay and is writing to the hospital trust to express her concerns.

Rachel Redman told the Ashford inquest last Thursday: "There had been a delay in the operation and an over-reliance on a conservative approach in the face of a deteriorating clinical condition."

Mrs Redman, who gave a narrative verdict, said: "I shall be writing to the chief executive of the trust with my concerns about what I have heard, the fact that surgery was not done at an early stage."

Mrs Maben, of Lakemead, Ashford, was first admitted to the town's William Harvey Hospital on April 21 last year suffering symptoms such as abdominal pains.

She was given what was described as conservative treatment, and was monitored with checks such as for blood pressure.

'It was a dilemma of doing too much, too early or too little, too late'

When she appeared to be better she was sent home three days later but had to be readmitted on April 28 with similar symptoms and the same treatment continued until she collapsed.

The inquest heard that her bowel had twisted and gangrene had set in. Surgery took place on May 6 but she finally died in the intensive care ward on May 11.

Cause of death was primarily multi-organ failure and generalised peritonitis, a serious abdomen condition especially caused by infection.

Chinedu Chianakwalam, hospital consultant general surgeon, said that Mrs Maben had been admitted to the hospital on April 21 last year with abdominal pain and vomiting and was found to have a small bowel obstruction.

He said by the next day the patient had become stable and if she had needed surgery it would have been carried out. He said the day after, April 23, the abdominal pain eased.

Mr Chianakwalam said by



Donna Maben in August 2008, the year before she died after surgeons failed to operate in time to save her

April 24 she was discharged, having got better and asked to go home.

But she was brought back to the hospital on April 28, again suffering abdominal pain, vomiting and dehydration.

An X-ray confirmed again that she had a small bowel obstruction.

But consultant surgeon Nagesh Rao told the hearing that in the first days of her second admittance he did not think Mrs Maben urgently

needed surgery and there had been improvements in her condition.

He said: "I didn't think that we needed to rush into theatre without looking at all the options.

"My own feeling was we could continue with conservative management."

He admitted that by May 5 she should have gone to theatre but said there was a dilemma of doing "too much, too early or too little, too late."