

To Derek Collins
Jane Eyre
Tara Ganapathy

September 19, 2022

I am submitting a letter for the record of my nursing home experience for the upcoming congressional hearing on Sept. 21, 2022

My wife was admitted to a nursing home for rehab in Dec of 2019. She was there for 3 weeks as that was all the insurance company would approve. She returned 3 months later as her medical condition declined. She remained in a nursing home until her death in January of 2022.

I will not address the Covid lock-out period as I don't think that is what you are looking for. I was at her side from 9:00 am until 8:00 pm seven days a week as I would not leave her there alone due to the lack of good care. I was retired so I was able to do it.

Basically the care just was not good. She was not changed every 2-3 hours that was recommended. This was true for other residents as well. I lost count of the UTI's that many residents experienced which I attributed to not being changed enough. There were quite a few errors in medication with my wife as well as others. On one occasion a nurse came in at night with insulin and my wife told him she was not a diabetic. Thank God she was able to tell him. He had the wrong room. This was not an isolated incident. Residents would have to wait at times an hour after summoning a CNA for assistance. I witnessed this myself. It's one reason I stayed hours everyday so that my wife's quality of life would be better as there were quite a few things I did for her myself. Most of the residents do not get visitors so they have to suffer. The food, again some of which I ate, was terrible. Cold, dried out, over cooked etc. As far as a meal plan geared toward cardiac care? Practically non-existent. My wife was supposed to be on a low salt diet and fluid restricted neither of which occurred with regularity. I often sat and thought these people are alive in spite of 'them'. My wife suffered a broken femur at the age of 88 due to being pushed out of her bed by a CNA who was changing her one night. At that point she could no longer even be hoisted to a chair so she was bedridden. Prior to the lock-out, she was able to stand and walk with a walker to her recliner or a commode. Shortly after the lock-out when I was no longer able to visit, she became a total hoist lift patient and could

no longer stand or walk. She never regained that ability. Complaints to DPH as far as I could tell were not addressed in a timely manner. We did of course report her fall but I never heard back on a decision from DPH which was supposed to happen.

I could go on and on. Suffice it to say life in a nursing home is horrific. Literally. Residents are afraid to report things which historically has been a problem. I know families who are also afraid to report things. I always did and was not afraid because I was there 7 days a week and they knew it.

The people I knew from around the state with residents in nursing homes all reported the same things and more.

This is so extreme and may seem over-stated but it's true. I have heard family members say if they end up in a nursing home they would rather die. I must say I share that thought.

These homes have never been good it's just that people didn't know about it including myself and my wife. Also the fact that people and spouses like myself have to lose so much money that was needed to live on to get this terrible care. I don't know what I will do going forward but I guess that's another issue.

Thank you so much for your advocacy. It means a lot to us.

Debra Ellis