

March 26, 2021

Sirs and ma'ams,

I've been encouraged to write to you about accessibility--or lack thereof--to my parents in a facility.

First, let me say that Via Christi at McLean in Wichita is one of the finest facilities around. We toured several and found this to be the best with availability last February. My stepdad, Dale Rich, had a stroke and after being in rehab several weeks, had to be admitted to long-term care. He was my mother's (Barbara Rich) caregiver, so when he had to leave home, so did she. Turns out we got them admitted at just the right time. Mom was helping me clean out their apartment and she had to be locked in mid-March, leaving me to finish the job by April 1.

Dale's daughters and I could visit them until that time. After then, we could only do window visits and phone calls. Dale was receiving physical, occupational and speech therapy until the cost went to \$40/treatment. After then, his condition deteriorated until he couldn't hold a cell phone and he didn't understand who we were at the window.

We were promised that when Dale's "time came" that we could visit him at any time, taking precautions to wear a mask and sanitize our hands. Even after we called in hospice, that didn't happen. Part of that was miscommunication with the staff, but we were not allowed to visit him as we needed to.

The day after he died, July 12, we weren't allowed to stay inside to visit with each other as his room was being cleaned out.

Mom still lives at Via Christi, and is relatively happy. However, after her husband of almost 35 years died, she was quarantined in her room. ANY time she was able to get outside (to celebrate her birthday August 20 and my birthday, October 2), she was quarantined up to one week. That's what many of the residents experienced after being outside for any reason. They cannot leave their rooms for anything!

Despite Mom living at her facility for several months, after Dale died, ALL residents had to eat ALL meals in their rooms! She knew no one on the assisted living side of Via Christi. She did get to know the nurses and aides, but not other residents.

Fortunately, since the COVID numbers have dropped significantly, the rules have been loosened. We can now have in-person visits in the lobby for up to 45 minutes. Of course, we are screened.

Unfortunately, because Mom was advised by her health coordinator, she did not have the COVID shot. I refuse to take it. For those two reasons, we cannot visit in her room. Other residents are allowed to visit with family in their rooms. It's not like we talk about private things when we are in the lobby, but I haven't been in her room to help her with things since July.

I know that all of you will do your very best to keep Kansans safe. Mom is now able to attend activities available to residents. She looks good, especially for being 88. I know of people in other states that have not fared as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Debbie

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