

I am asking for your support of Senate Bill No. 2145.

Having a designated caregiver during a declaration of disaster or emergency is a win/win situation for all.

Watching and communicating with my father and staff through a window for nine months was not pleasant. My father passed away on Thanksgiving Day. He was Covid free, and right up to the end we were not allowed to be with him. Many of these facilities are short staffed and they are not able to give the care required to residents. Residents are so sad and lonely, and starving for attention. If staff did give my dad 30 seconds of their time, I could see the sparkle in his eyes that someone communicated with him and gave him some attention.

Having a designated caregiver would be helpful in so many ways. It would free up time for staff. One day a worker was in the room for a half hour trying to get an oxygen reading on my dad, as their checker never seemed to work properly. That is something so simple a caregiver could help with. Loved ones can help with meals. They could make sure the oxygen is in their nose, instead of as I witnessed when I would call and ask the nurse to put it back in, she would say "Well, he keeps taking it out!" A caregiver could give quality, one on one time to their loved one, reading, conversing, simple physical and occupational therapy, and giving human touch, something they all need.

We were almost glad when he went to the hospital during the past nine months and we could be in the hospital with him. We gave him a haircut, fixed his wheelchair, brought him an ice cream cone, etc. It was amazing to see how clear his head was and the good mood he was in when family was with him. There were also some sad things we discovered during a couple of hospital visits. One was his toenails had not been cut for 2 ½ years. Yes, 2 ½ years! During one of his last trips to the hospital, I saw his bed sores firsthand in ER. Blood running down his butt, raw in another area, and a larger area that was red and purple, bruised looking. Absolutely no reason for a person to get bed sores of this magnitude! Residents are not being checked, turned or tended to. A crucial reason a caregiver needs to be with their loved one.

My dad fiercely loved his kids. Having him motion to you every day through the window to come in, and every day telling him we can't come in, and watching him deteriorate as the months went by, is indescribable and unforgiveable. He, as well as many of the residents in these homes, would much rather have a family member with them than to be alone and/or die alone in isolation.

Being in a facility that was rated in the top five worst in the state, it was crucial that we be there by his side every day. Pre-Covid, my siblings and I spent around seven hours every day with him, and during Covid, around five hours every day outside his window.

If a family member could be with their loved one, they are going to take every precaution to protect them. It is a disgrace to have tortured so many of these people with making them spend their final time on earth alone, when all they wanted was to have their family beside them.

I ask you to please support Senate Bill 2145.

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