

September 28, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Melissa Sicco. I am writing on behalf of my father Michael Sicco. My Dad was diagnosed with ALS unexpectedly 5 years ago. With open arms, my Mom and I took care of my Dad at home for almost a year. My brother who lives out of state would come to help when he could as well. As that year progressed, my Father's illness worsened to a point of exhaustion for my Mother, Brother, and I. We reached out at that time and started our long process for Medicaid for his care.

At that point, putting him into a skilled nursing home was our only option while Medicaid was being processed. While at this skilled nursing home for only a month, my father became very ill and was in ICU for months fighting for his life due to lack of care he needed and didn't receive from staff along with being unequipped or ventilators.

My mother received a phone call we will never forget. My Dad was accepted for Medicaid. We were referred and accepted into Eleanor Slater Hospital (Regan Building) in Cranston, RI. It had its' own respiratory care unit /floor. This facility along with the staff have changed my Father's quality of life for the better. They quickly acted to get a special rotating bed that was hard to come by and that he can't live without. All staff (Doctors, Nurses, and CNA's) are family and giving him the best 24 hour care that he needs so badly. My Dad is fully vented on a ventilator, feeding tube dependent, and bed bound.

The reason of this letter is heartbreaking. We have been given a phone call today that the state wants to close down my Father's facility (Regan Building, Eleanor Slater Hospital) saying there isn't enough funding to keep it open. They mentioned they would send him to a skilled nursing home which will not and can't be an option again as I'm sure you understand where we are coming from. Also, it was mentioned that he could be sent to the Zambarano Building which doesn't have a respiratory unit or nor equipped. This is the only other option given to us in the state of Rhode Island.

It is a very old building with no filtration system. It is not close to Rhode Island Hospital which is where he goes for any emergency situations and/or appointments. This is what works for him.

The Regan Building is close for us to have our visits for his social/emotional state as well. As my Mom is getting older as well, the drive to the Regan Building is suitable for her then a long distance commute which she couldn't possibly do on a daily basis. With how Covid has kept us from seeing him, this facility (Regan) is keeping him safe and healthy. The staff made sure we could have video meets regularly to keep his spirits up. Also, to make him feel he is not abandoned but loved. The staff is truly family and care. We would be lost without them.

In conclusion, please help us fight for our Dad to stay where he is and keep the Regan Building open. What they are putting out on the table is truly heartbreaking and making us so sick to even think this could happen. Let us be heard at this time by someone!! It is our understanding this is going to the legislative so I wanted to take action and be heard. My father needs a voice more than ever now. Please help us and stop this from happening to not only my Dad but to the other patients, families, and staff on his Respiratory Care Unit floor.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and help us make some kind of a difference for his future for staying as healthy and safe as he has been.

Fondly,
Melissa Sicco
West Warwick, RI