

June Testifying to Senate Committee
2/21/2018

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is June I'd like to testify and tell my story about the horrible care my dad has received in Minnesota's nursing homes. Unfortunately, I'm not able to do this in person as I am currently trying to get better care for my father and I fear retaliation if I speak out publicly.

After reaching out to staff, the facility director, and the Minnesota Department of Health, I still feel my concerns are being ignored and my father's health continues to decline rapidly. That's why I am writing to you today. In the simplest of terms, facilities need to be held accountable. I did not intend to send my father to a human warehouse that locks the key and shields its mistakes from the public eye, but that's exactly how I feel.

My father has dementia. His health, mood, and well-being are better when he is properly treated, shaven, and dressed. He does not deserve to go weeks without bathing. He does not deserve to have staff that can't understand or empathize with his needs. He needs to be redirected and encouraged to get ready for the day or attend a doctor's appointment – not bullied or threatened. The memory care unit I sent my father to live in does not adequately train staff to care for vulnerable adults with dementia.

My dad's health has declined rapidly from the lack of care received. Since admission to the facility, my father's foot is now irritated with a large, painful infection that will spread if not taken care of properly. His foot was perfectly healthy upon admission. Staff ignored this infection for weeks, telling me they didn't have the staff or capacity to care for my dad in the manner I expected. They never reported my father's infection to the doctor for treatment. I left the director a message, but I have yet to not receive a response. My father has fallen five times in one week as a result of the foot injury. He is in pain. This is ignored by the staff. It's up to me to take the necessary actions to fulfill his every need as he remains on this earth, as a human being.

As my father's primary advocate, I'm ignored by staff and facility management when trying to improve his care. There needs to be a better way to facilitate conversations with employees, family members, and those who are greatly concerned for their loved ones well-being.

Seeing the way staff manages my father's care, I believe we have to go back to the basics -- teaching staff how to care for older and vulnerable adults. After finding a well-trained CNA to help my father, I have seen vast improvements in his health. Unfortunately, I had to act ugly to gain much needed attention for his welfare, care, and needs.

I spoke to my father one evening and asked him "Daddy, how do you feel?" His response was "Baby, I feel good and I look good too." Those words touched my heart. He felt this way because I sent someone

to properly care for him in the manner he deserves—in the manner all our elders and vulnerable adults deserve, with dignity

My parents taught me to always respect your elders, I was blessed to have all my grandparents and great grandparents, I wouldn't be the person I am today without them. "It takes a village to raise a child." And today it takes many villages to make the demands to have quality health care and dignity for the elderly.

Thank you for the work you are doing and for listening to my experience with Minnesota nursing homes. I hope to see the consumer recommendations implemented for the sake of my father and other vulnerable adults.

June



This is a picture of the back of my father's heel