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Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Thursday, March 25, 2021

Written testimony given by:
Holly Noble, Administrator
Attica Long Term Care

Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns in regard to SB 303. As you can imagine these times have not only been stressful for all of us in long term care, but also for those families that we serve. I understand the sentiment behind this bill, and I want this committee to understand that there is not one single nursing home in our state that wants to ban families from walking into our homes and giving their family the love and attention that they rightfully deserve. Our home is focused on providing care in a home-like environment. Nowhere in our mission or vision statement do we state that we want to isolate our elders from their loved ones. We make it our mission to be creative during these unprecedented times and to get creative when it comes to visitations.

Our elders have had outside visits with their loved ones whenever the weather permitted. We built a temporary outside visitation room that has both heat and air conditioning so that the family can be comfortable during their visit. We also have indoor visits depending on our county positivity rate. We have FaceTime, Google Duo, plus many phone calls and letters. Our home was even able to continue with our PEAK goal and was even able to obtain the mentor home level. We have been able to obtain all this while still following all CDC recommendations and CMS regulations.

The concerns I have if this bill were to pass are the following:

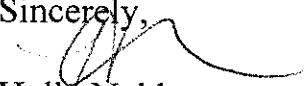
1. Higher rate of passing Covid to our elders or staff: We are already not allowed to test our families as they come in to visit, and starting to let people

freely come in and out would increase our rate of susceptibility to contract Covid-19. Like many other homes, I speak from a home that has already suffered through a Covid outbreak that took the lives of 13 of our elders and sickened an additional 34 staff members. We were left in a staffing crisis that had me working the floor 16-hour days, seven days a week for a solid 2 months, and all that in addition to keeping up with my duties as the Administrator, plus I had to be separated from my young children as well. So, by opening up our doors, I would ask you what assurance can we get when we are in another staffing crisis, and we have more sick elders and possibly another shortage of PPE? Who is going to step in and help us?

2. Fines: The citations and fines we would pay for not following CMS regulations would not only be a fiduciary nightmare for us, but it would also affect our 5-star rating which families consider when deciding in which home they want to place their loved ones. It would also affect our sustainability.
3. Sustainability: If we are unable to keep our door open as one of the largest employers of our town, I worry what it would do to our local economy and for our small rural town.

In conclusion, this bill is not only unsafe for our elders and staff, but it is also detrimental to our rural communities as well. This bill has the potential of opening a true Pandora's box.

Sincerely,


Holly Noble
Administrator
Attica Long Term Care