

Comments from Debra Ellis

I attended the Zoom meeting held on Monday at 10:15 of the Socialization, Visitation and Caregiver Engagement Subcommittee. I joined at the point where Mr. Barrett was discussing the word 'caregiver'. I began typing comments in the CHAT section addressing what I was hearing but it did not seem to be active or visible to anyone. I will post my comments below.

I preface them by saying I have been involved in a group of family members who have been affected by the closure of visitation at the nursing homes. I had hopes that this committee would be a means to an end of what has been in my opinion horrific handling of this pandemic.

My wife is a resident in a home and we have both been victims, her of course more so than myself. What I heard in this meeting was what I've been hearing from others for months. Most of the people on your committee have no clue. Absolutely no clue. My mouth literally dropped at Mr. Barrett's statements regarding the CMS guidelines regarding visitation. It tells me that he is totally out of touch with what is going on. Many homes have not been following the guidelines. They are not working. And even in the homes where they are being followed it is nowhere near enough. One visit a week for ½ hour? Are you serious? It troubles me that someone so out of touch is in the position that he is in.

We have all been suffering and waiting for the vaccines. Now that they are being given out and the residents protected from the virus to a very high degree, we are told the isolation will continue. I listened to the panel of 'experts' a couple of weeks ago explain the science behind the vaccines and then explain that we will still not be allowed into our loved ones rooms to sit by their sides etc. When will this nonsense end? You present experts and statistics on COVID 19. Where were the mental health experts to explain the consequences of isolation? Where is the mental health professional on your committee? What are the numbers and statistics on the physical and mental decline of the residents.

Debra Ellis.

Below is a copy of what I posted in the chat during the meeting:

Lets not get hung up on semantics. I saw my wife everyday. 7 days a week for hours each day. I was not her caregiver. It meant when she woke up she could turn and see me there. She could hold my hand. I did provide care in the sense that she did not have to wait 20 minutes for a CNA to pick up a remote control that she dropped. The CNA's thru no fault of their own didn't have time to care for her before COVID. This needs to end NOW. This cannot wait until June. I've been told even the vaccines will not allow us back in. I was not a visitor. I am her wife who promised that I would be there everyday and never

leave her alone. The damage this has already done is unspeakable to both residents and families. To Mr. Barrett's comment about technology, it has done NOTHING to improve the feeling of isolation. None of you are going through this. You cannot imagine having a loved one separated from you for almost 1 year in a place where you know the care is substandard. Would a weekly facetime or phone call be satisfactory? None of you are talking from experience. May I ask who on this committee has a loved one currently in a nursing home? The immediate problem is reuniting residents with the person who has a history of being there everyday with them. Period. This is not about opening up the homes to all visitors. Trust me, from what I observed there would not be that many people who went 7 days a week for hours. These are the people who need to be allowed in. The homes know who they are. Staffing and other issues are critical and do need to be dealt with for the future. Residents are declining. This is criminal. I am in the process of discussing and deciding on just bringing my wife home so we can be together and let whatever happens happen. Rep. Hughes is correct. Many people are not and will not recover from the present decline. Some of you can spout your statistics and numbers. All well and good but it does not address the real consequences of isolation. There are and will be deaths from COVID without the people actually catching the virus. I have the sickening feeling that the weeks you have met and with all of the talk, nothing is going to change. DPH will never get behind letting us in because the commissioner does not want this. Dr. Gifford is against us. The Governor is against us. I believe that is why Dr. Gifford was put in this position replacing Dr. Renee Coleman-Mitchell. That's why this is a lost cause here in CT.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10