

February 5, 2024

SB352 Proponent Written Only Testimony

Chairwoman Gossage and Committee Members,

I personally experienced what the Covid lockdowns did to the elderly in a health care facility. FaceTime chats, window visits and phone calls are not conducive to healing. What does promote healing and good mental health are physical contact, hugs, holding a hand, or simply just being there for someone. I truly believe my mom's dementia progressed more rapidly during the Covid lockdowns. Do I have any proof of this? No. But I did observe the decrease in her desire to live, an increase in her depression, and a definite decrease in her interaction with others once the lockdowns were lifted. The fact that we must write legislation to ensure a patient is allowed visitation in medical facilities is beyond belief.

I do have concerns with some items in this bill, such as limiting visitors to 2 at a time. I understand in certain facilities, such as an ICU, CICU, etc., but for someone at the end of their life, I don't agree with the limitations. My sister-in-law spent several days in hospice before she passed. She had 5 children, 3 siblings with spouses, 2 parents and 6 nieces. We were all there and no one ever suggested we needed to leave. She died in 2016. Covid changed everything and none of those changes have been good.

Let's visit a potential scenario. I'm in an accident, unconscious, no DPOA and I don't have any immediate family members in town. My family members have been notified by police and call a friend and ask them to be with me until they arrive. If I read this correctly, the facility is under no obligation to allow that friend to visit me. If the facility does not allow the visitor and I die before my family arrives, then another patient has died alone. This bill is designed to prevent that but I'm afraid this is an instance in which it may not.

I do not completely agree with SB 352, but I am asking the committee to consider the concerns mentioned above and recommend this bill be passed out of committee. The need for this bill saddens me, but this bill is much better than what was submitted previously and unfortunately, we need something to protect patients so they do not suffer alone in a medical facility, or worse yet, die alone.

Kari Sue

Vosburgh

Sedgwick County Precinct Committeewoman

We The People Kansas