

2-4-2024

I would like to thank this committee for allowing my voice to be heard. My name is Rod Haley, I am a long term care licensed administrator writing this testimonial in support of SB 352. I have been in senior living in the Wichita Kansas area for 15 years. Some of the things that I witnessed in 2020 and 2021 were terrible.

We, as administrator's were forced to lock our buildings down which meant no one was allowed to enter our community except for certain essential medical professionals. I cannot tell you how damaging this was for the mental health of the residents, family members and even our health care workers. People were forced to stay in their rooms, family was not allowed to visit the residents in their rooms. It was so sad to see people pass away with no family next to them. Our healthcare workers were allowed to be there for them, but we all know that is not the same as your immediate family. I ran 2 different communities during this timeframe and had to witness this in both communities. In the midst of all of this, our residents withdrew due to the isolation, many of them had to be treated for depression. They were not allowed to do anything outside of their room for the longest time. After the worst of this was over, I still had residents that got so used to being isolated that it took many of them a very long time to come out of their rooms again. It was sad to see grandchildren writing messages on the concrete to their grandparents with chalk and writing "I love you" notes to them and taping them to their windows outside. Imagine being told that you cannot leave your room for any reason and see what that would do to your mental health. Imagine not being able to get a hug from your children or grandchildren for months and months. Imagine not being able participate in any meaningful activities with your fellow residents, who were all in the same were building in the same boat together. This made no sense to me or many of the other administrators that I know. Many of my residents used the word prison when referring to that timeframe.

I know many healthcare workers who had promising careers in healthcare that just could not take having to treat people this way and just quit during this time. It was sad that the mandates that were imposed upon use caused so much damage. In 2020 we were locked down and everyone was isolated. I believe that it is obvious to most reasonable people these days that this should have never happened nor should it ever be allowed to happen again. If I were asked to do this again, I would definitely resign or be fired as I could not and would not do this again.

Several family members saw the writing on the wall, so to speak and took their loved ones home during this time period, and they were glad they did. We had several leave during the pandemic and a few of them returned after it was over. They knew it was not our management that forced them to do this, it was forced on us.

Please pass SB 352 for the sake of everyone.