

To whom it may concern.

I have not been able to sit with my wife for 10 months.

I have not been able to hold my wife's hand for 10 months.

We talk on the phone daily and it breaks my heart to hear her say she started talking to me and turned and I wasn't there. She tells me daily how much she misses me.

I notice a decline in her memory and a growing lack of interest. She no longer reads books. She sleeps a lot. I see some personality change as well as other subtle changes.

We have been a couple for 47 years.

I promised her I would never leave her alone in there.

I promised her I would be there every day to help her.

I fulfilled those promises until March 13, 2020, when executive order 7A imposed a complete ban on all visitors. This was clearly stated and immediate. At the time it was absolutely necessary until we got a handle on what we were dealing with. It was to last 30 days unless canceled earlier. How were we to know that this would remain in place 10 months later? This did not come down as a 'recommendation'. It was not a 'guideline'. It was an order that left no room for interpretation.

We are now in need of an executive order appointing an essential caregiver to stop the damage being done by isolation. This also needs to be effective immediately.

I have listened to a few of the subcommittee meetings and applaud some of what I have heard. Other things I have heard make me shake my head and think some of you don't have a clue.

I implore you to seek an Essential Caregiver status as defined by members of your committee.

The recommendation for an essential caregiver is in the Mathematica study as one of the short term solutions. Why did we order the study to the tune of \$450,000.00 if we are going to ignore its findings?

I can't say I am not terrified of my wife getting Covid. I am also terrified of her suffering decline from the effects of isolation. I know I would not increase her risk of acquiring Covid beyond the risk that the staff presents. I do believe my absence increases her risk of decline. Most of the facilities are experiencing staffing shortages even beyond what existed in the past. As we know, staffing has always been a problem. The addition of an essential caregiver, in view of the shortages, would not increase the risk at all because they already don't have as many bodies working there as they should.

Where are the mental health experts on your various panels? Why only epidemiologists? Why only infection control? Are we not more than our bodies? All we read about is how urgent the need to recognize and treat mental health and emotional health and yet that is what we are ignoring.

I had such hope that once the residents received the vaccinations and were protected we would be allowed back into the facility. All I am hearing now is that it still won't happen. So how much longer is this going to take? How much more decline is going to be denied?

Isolation is felt not thought.

You are trying to understand from your heads, not your hearts.

My wife and countless others are the victims of your being mired in cognitive quicksand. They are the ones sinking, not you.

It seems to me the moral philosophy component is somehow left out.

The philosopher Peter Singer, who regularly tops lists of the most influential people worldwide, is known for his controversial, yet highly convincing, utilitarian outlook. Utilitarian ethicists believe that the consequences of an action determine whether or not it is moral.

This is not moral.

To coin an old phrase by another philosopher Virgil, as the Latin proverb aegrescit medendo would imply, the cure is worse than the disease.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Debra Ellis