

To Whom It May Concern:

My 106 year old mother has been in a nursing home since the beginning of the Covid pandemic.. At first she was there for rehabilitation, so talking through the sun room windows or on face time, while definitely not an ideal situation, was something we reluctantly accepted as a temporary situation since we thought she would be coming home in a matter of a few weeks. Unfortunately, her situation deteriorated and it was determined that she is terminally ill and has only a short time to live. During the warmer weather, she has been able to visit with the family outside, but we must wear our masks and maintain a distance of six feet. To see her being wheeled outside to us with her arms outstretched for a hug and having to tell her we can't, or to watch her cry because she can't hold her great-great granddaughter in her lap is beyond heartbreaking and, in my opinion, cruel and inhumane. And trying to explain this Covid situation to her is difficult. At her age she really doesn't understand it, and I can't compare it with her to the 1918 plague since she was too young back then to remember it.

To their credit, the home where she is residing has been Covid free from the beginning and remains so. Even meeting with her outside, we are required to have our temperatures checked and, as I said, to wear masks. I have been told that I will be able to enter the premises to sit with her and hold her hand when "death is imminent". At that point she won't even know that I'm there with her. My mother, as well as the other residents, desperately NEEDS human contact NOW. The isolation from family has contributed to the rapid deterioration of her mental status and I see no reason why we can't be allowed visit with her in her room as long as we wear our masks, and sanitize, even if it's only for a few minutes a day. She has reached the point in her illness where getting her out of bed takes a tremendous physical toll on her, so now she lies in bed alone every day with nothing to look forward to. The staff there is outstanding and compassionate and doing all they can, but they are not family and cannot take our place as such.

Especially since this facility has remained Covid free, I see no reason why, as long as proper precautions are taken, family should be banned from visits. This isolation is heartbreaking for my mother, as well as our entire family. I respectfully ask you to re-think and reconsider the banning of visitors. If handled properly, as this particular nursing home has obviously done, there is no reason why these elderly people have to suffer the isolation and loneliness they are enduring.

Sincerely,

Betty Knox
Griswold CT