

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
Government of British Columbia
Room 337 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

May 12, 2018

Dear Minister Dix:

I am writing to request your support for the "Proposal for Change – Supporting Residents in Care", a document sent to you by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils.

My mother was admitted to Dufferin Place, which is part of the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, in November 2013. At the time there was no family council. A group of us were concerned about the quality of care and the quality of food provided to the residents. Then manager, Marjorie Kemp, put me in touch with Kim Slater, who had formed a family council at Nanaimo Seniors Village. This led to the formation of the Dufferin Place Family Council.

Unlike some other councils, the decision was made to allow residents to attend meetings. This was very beneficial for the residents as they felt more comfortable discussing problems and issues. There is a resident council, however many residents are scared to bring up their own concern for fear of reprisal.

We have been very fortunate in the support we have received from the manager and other supervisors. The biggest issue the residents have is the quality of food. The food is cooked at the hospital and then driven over to the facility. The food was sometimes cold and in a few cases some items arrived frozen. The food manager took steps to address this problem. Coffee was sub-par and after many complaints a coffee tasting was held, and the residents were able to choose a better coffee. We were also able to get pies added to the dessert menu. The residents were extremely happy. When you are in your late 70's or older, it is a small thing like this which improves your mood and satisfaction. I have just been advised throughout efforts and those of the general manager and food services manager, that Island Health has dedicated funds to re-open the kitchen at the care facility.

We have also been able to advocate for those who do not have family support. An example of this was the length of time a resident was told to wait for assistance to use the washroom. He had been told he could only get help in the morning and before bedtime. This was totally unacceptable and when brought it to the manager's attention, it was addressed. The resident himself was too scared to bring it forward himself, as he feared reprisal.

Many of our seniors are very vulnerable and need a voice. The family council can assist by being their voice.

When I meet with other members from other Family Councils I feel blessed that my mother was put in a Health Authority facility. There are mechanisms in place to address issues which do not exist in many other facilities.

I respectfully request that you implement the recommendation contained in the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils "Proposal for Change". Those recommendations will not have a huge financial impact for care facilities and will go a long way to improve the lives of our seniors.

Sincerely yours,

Sheryl Armstrong (Chair, Dufferin Placer Family Council)
6154 Kenning Place
Nanaimo B.C.
V9R 6T5