

To:

18 March, 2019

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

Dear Minister Dix,

I had the chance to meet you personally in October 2018, during the meetings to request an end to contract-flipping; (it was very positive to see that the desired legislation has come into existence, excellent news!). It's my hope in sending this letter, that we members of the Lakeshore Family Council can add our voice in support of the effort by the Vancouver Island Association of Family Councils to request changes to the regulations that apply to Family Councils such as ours.

Family Councils offer family members and other supporters a way to provide mutual support and exchange of helpful information, as well as an unified way to work with administration and staff to improve care. Unfortunately, there is a need for clarifying and reinforcing the regulations that apply to Family Councils.

We at Lakeshore have experienced directly how precarious the existence of Family Councils can be. We formed in response to the layoff of staff at Lakeshore, but immediately saw the advantages of coming together to bring concerns and questions to the administration. We introduced ourselves to the owner and head staff, and had one informal meeting with both, but no further response to our introduction until we were recently informed that a Family Council was being formed at Lakeshore, to be managed by the administrators. We were taken aback, to say the least. Our impression is that Fraser Health, or some of its employees, has not understood that Family Councils are meant to be independent entities, for what would seem to be obvious reasons: conflict of interest, reluctance to speak openly to those with 'power' of decision over relatives, fear of reprisal, etc. We are now permitted to hold our meetings in the building, but expected to include the Resident Care Coordinator. We will continue to point out the actual regulations and hope that there will eventually be recognition that a licensee 'supports' a Council rather than running it.

This experience has certainly made clear to us how vulnerable our existence is, in the face of owners, DOCs or Health Authority employees who insist a Family Council is meant to be administered by the licensee. We are also learning much a FC has to offer when allowed to be equal member of the team seeking to offer quality care to residents of care centres.

Thank you for considering these important clarifications that will improve conditions for so many. It would also be excellent to have assistance in forming regional associations that can support us in our efforts.

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