

July 22, 2020
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To Whom it May Concern:

My husband, John H. Waggoner, 80 years old is a patient at Lamun Lusk Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home in Big Spring, TX. in the memory unit. The care is excellent!

We have been married 56 years. He served in the US Air Force for 25 ½ years during the Cuban crisis, the Vietnam war, in Puerto Rico, Korea, Okinawa, and Germany besides stateside bases. He also served for 14 years as a correctional officer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He is a 100% disabled veteran due to frontotemporal dementia, PTSD, hearing loss, and arthritis of knees due to an accident on the flight line.

With the dementia, I cared for him for 18 years at home with some help from caregivers. On Feb.6, 2020, he had two serious falls within 24 hours, hitting the back of his head each time, causing him to be immobile. He was admitted to Hendricks Hospital in Abilene for 5 days and transferred to the VA Home, Big Spring, on Feb. 11, 2020.

The COVID lockdown began on Mar. 9, 2020, and we have been unable to see each other in person since that date. That is 136 days of a disastrous situation for a memory care patient! We have been able to have window visits since mid May. Since no family has been inside the facility since Mar. 9, it is obvious we have not brought in the virus, while employees go in and out daily. This facility is COVID free and both patients and staff are tested regularly. As an elderly adult with a life threatening health issue myself, I have been far more quarantined than any staff member at this facility.

There are ways for SAFE in person visits, and I am asking for that to happen. My husband and I both are depressed, isolated, and declining. Will we ever get to see each other for a hug, to hold a hand, or give a kiss again before one of us dies?

26 states allow in person visits. What is the issue with Texas? Yes, I know the virus rates are high in some areas, but not all. Isolation is a killer as much as any virus! Please have some compassion for the patients and families who are dealing with this heartbreak and allow us to visit our loved ones in person!

Sincerely,

Carol Waggoner

CC: Kim Coates, TLB
Melissa Tumlin VA Home Administrator
Touchstone Management
Texas Veterans land Board, Chairman, George P. Bush
Greg Abbott, Governor