

Dear Chairman Ginther and members of the Ohio House Aging & Long-term Care Committee,

I have been a physician assistant for 27 years and a caregiver for my 93-year-old mother, who lives in an independent apartment, on the campus of Wiggins Place in Beachwood, Ohio. Wiggins Place is an independent assisted living facility that does not offer care.

My mother has some medical issues, including moderate dementia. Her rational thinking is fine, but her memory is suffering. For the past four years, since my mother moved in, I have been recognized by the facility as her caregiver. I provide the care she needs, but that the facility does not offer. This arrangement has worked well for all, until recently. Due to the coronavirus, visitors are prohibited and my status as a caregiver is no longer recognized by Wiggins Place.

Instead, my mother is required by the facility to pay out-of-pocket for an aide, who is less qualified, to do a fraction of what I have been doing for the past four years. In addition to the costs, I believe that my mother is at a greater risk of infection exposure from different contracted aides who come in and out the facility daily, than from consistently seeing just me. It has also been noted that contracted aides are not tracked in the same way by the facility as permanent staff when it comes to their COVID-19 status.

They are not providing any level of care with ADLs (or activities of daily living) such as eating, bathing, getting dressed, using the restroom etc. I want to stress that these aides are outside, contracted aides that are not optional but required. My mother had no say in this. She is now paying rent and paying for the contracted aides. Dementia aide care can cost \$150,000 annually, so I have repeatedly tried to contact the facility to get the names of the healthcare providers she is being offered to at least determine if they are in-network and covered by my mother's healthcare plan. The facility is not being transparent and when I challenged them, they sent letters from their attorneys and will no longer take my calls.

I have reached out to the Ohio Ombudsman, but at this time even the ombudsman are prevented from entering the facilities.

I am sharing my story with you, as a family caregiver and a daughter that is concerned about the lack of discussion and understanding at all levels of the vital role family caregivers have. This important issue needs to be a topic of discussion. Not all living facilities can be generalized under the same category and abide by the same regulations, every facility is different and has different offerings. Someone has to be able to help. This is a crime.

Sincerely,

Debra Kangisser