

On March 10, our lives were turned upside down when Gov. DeWine ordered nursing facilities to shut down. Six months later we still cannot touch our loved ones. Our only means of communicating for the first 4 months were by phone, video chats when someone was able to do that for us, and window visits through screens and closed windows. For some that worked but not for my husband. It was difficult for him to hold the cordless phone and when we tried using a tablet, he would look to where the voice was coming from and not at me.

In mid-July we were allowed 2 thirty minute visits a week outside. We have to be six feet apart and masked. Absolutely, not touching. Visits were cancelled because of weather and when there were suspected cases of covid or when someone test positive.

In mid-October visits were moved indoors in a designated area. We are only permitted what works out to two visits a week, because the facility requires a visitor to wait 72 hours before visiting again. These have been shut down again because of staff testing positive, which have often been determined to be false positives.

My husband, Bob has been a resident of Green Meadows Health and wellness Center in Louisville, Ohio since January of 2019. We were sent to Green Meadows from the Cleveland Clinic after he had to undergo a tracheotomy as well as a feeding tube due to a cancerous tumor pressing on his larynx. The only other option was to remove the tumor and his voice box. He also has dementia and would have no way of communicating if we went that route. Because of the dementia, he has pulled the trach out several times and is in need of 24 hour care.

I have been reading about Essential Caregivers being allowed into facilities to help their loved ones. I believe with proper PPE, hand washing, and common sense one family member should be allowed access to their loved one inside the facility.

It's heartbreaking when Bob asks me when am I going to come in and sit with him like I used to do? I was with him 6-8 hrs. a day prior to March 10. Just the other day he commented to me that he was too much of a bother for me to take him with me. That was heart wrenching.

COVID is not going away. We need a way to be with our loved ones. If nurses and nursing assistants are going in, we should be able to follow the same prodigal and be allowed in. I'm very fortunate in that Bob is receiving great care. The nurses and their assistants are fabulous and treat my husband as one of their own. However, he needs me and I need him.

When Bob and I married, the minister said, "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder."  
What happened to separation of church and state?

Thank you,

Linda Schillig  
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