

6-13-24

Good afternoon. Saturday, June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Elder abuse takes many forms and is not always easy to recognize, even when it's taking place right under your nose. The vulnerable elderly are easily financially exploited and marginalized even today at our own Adult Care Center. Their insurance and the taxpayers pay the same as if they were at a five star facility, but what are they getting? You heard last month that the Medicare Compare staffing rating had increased to 3 stars, which is an average rating, although the overall rating for the facility is still one star. That makes it an entire year that the facility has been rated the worst rating possible. Both the staffing and Quality ratings will be frozen now until July. The rating for inspections can still change, which includes the record numbers of citations, complaints and ongoing investigations which continue to pile up at the facility, thanks to our so-called consultant, Infinitecare, which has been acting illegally as the operator since 2021, with the majority of the Sullivan County Legislature fully complicit in the actions that have resulted in the deterioration of the facility that we have now.

The facility is overdue for their DOH Survey, which is supposed to come every 15.9 months. Infinitecare performed their own mock Survey at the ACC and has concluded that they are now overstaffed, so after years of complaining about insufficient staffing, they are now cutting nursing staff schedules. Of course, there may have temporarily been sufficient numbers of staff, but with almost all medical staff per-diem, poor leadership, low standards, minimal orientation and training and poor enforcement of policies and procedures, we continue to hear stories like the one we heard last month from Barbara McKenny about her mother, who was already suffering from severe disability, sitting for days blinded by a severe double eye infection which was ignored and left untended and untreated. That was awful but I've heard even worse stories recently of patients self-harming while unsupervised and unprotected.

You legislators are responsible for what happens at the ACC. Today, and on Elder Abuse Awareness Day, I hope you can spare one moment to think about the disabled elders who are residents at the Adult Care Center and what their lives are like now at the one star facility. Elder abuse can happen anywhere, any time people turn away from someone vulnerable who needs their help. Each one of you legislators could do so much to help them but the majority of you have turned away. What is your own role in preventing elder abuse, as elected policymakers and operators of a nursing home? Please, take the ACC back to county management. End the contract with Infinitecare and dissolve the LDC. Keep your campaign promises and represent your constituents.

By the way, the ACC dishwasher got fixed, but it was the only one of the many broken machines in the kitchen that did. If you've read your monthly Health and Human Services report, you saw that Infinitecare reported that in April they ran a deficit of about \$90,000. To put it in perspective, that's about the same amount the county spent on the airport per month last year.

Thank you.