

16 July 2015

Lillian Topic, Secretary
Legal and Social Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Spring St.
Melbourne 3002

Submission into End-Of-Life Care,

Due to the appalling experience I had with my mother at Monterey Aged Care Facility I propose that

1. **There be a set ratio of registered nurses to patients** – At Monterey Aged Care Facility, Glenroy, approximately three years ago, there was one nurse for about 100 patients. I had to search for one and found one on another floor – there were at least 50 patients per floor. When my mother told me she could not stand the pain any longer, I had a long search to find a person to obtain pain relief for my mother.
2. **That patients be assisted to eat and drink.** When my mother told me she was hungry one morning, the kitchen staff said that palliative care patients are not offered anything, that is, they don't provide food or drink. One of the staff members told me they did not have time to feed her because they had to get other patients up, dressed and into the dining room. Once a glass of water was placed on her bedside table, but she could not pick it up and drink it by herself. I was told that they were acting on Doctor's Orders, however I cannot believe that a doctor would order a glass of water to be placed on a table, knowing that she could not access it. I gave her chicken broth and yoghurt, but the staff did not feed her with this either when I left it in her fridge.
3. **Patients should be allowed to get out of bed.** My mother frequently asked to get up and sit out of bed. This was refused. When she wanted to go to the toilet, she was told to go to the toilet in bed. She may have had a napkin on, but she wanted to get up and go herself, out of bed. We had to ask the staff to turn her.

In summary, she paid \$300 000 to get into this place, but my mother was starved and dehydrated to death, and provided with no pain relief until I arranged it. She was well when she entered, and not dying, so it was inappropriate that she be placed in "Palliative Care."

Yours faithfully,

Christine Royal



28 July 2015

Lillian Topic
Secretary, Legal and Social Affairs Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Melbourne3001

Dear Sirs and Mesdames,

Re: End-of-Life Choices Inquiry

I wish to make a submission to advise you what is happening in one nursing home - my mother was dehydrated and starved to death. I am appalled and outraged, and want you to do something to stop vulnerable people being killed in nursing homes. This home simply did not have enough staff and neglected my mother, to death.

Please find attached the letter I have written.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Christine Royal



Mrs Christine Royal

June 7th, 2015

Aged Care Complaints Scheme
Australian Department of Social Services
GPO Box 9820
Melbourne Vic 3000

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to raise a complaint about the palliative care given to my mother, Mrs. Laura Coleman, in the weeks preceding her death on 22nd December, 2011. My mother was in the care of Monterey Aged Care Facility (Blue Cross) in Pascoe Vale Road Glenroy.

My complaint is: 1. The facility failed to provide appropriate and sufficient sustenance and hydration in the weeks preceding my mother's death.

2. The facility failed to provide sufficient pain relief initially; and then, after I raised the issue, my mother was given excessive pain relief medication rendering my mother unconscious.

3. The facility failed to communicate with me and therefore did not act in accordance with my wishes and religious beliefs. The facility failed to implement an agreeable palliative care plan for the care and medical treatment of my mother.

4. The facility failed in their duty of care towards my mother.

I became aware that my mother was being placed in palliative care when I received a phone call from my sister, Jeanette Thomson. My understanding of palliative care was that Mum was going to receive extra care, such as in more intensive care, because she had been unwell. I felt pleased to know that Mum was going to be given extra attention, because I thought it would help her to recover.

Jeanette then told me that she wouldn't want our Mum resuscitated if and when she passed away. I agreed with my sister on that issue.

Several times when I visited Mum while she was in palliative care she asked if she could "sit out of bed" meaning she wanted to get up and sit in the chair. She was not assisted to do so. When Mum asked to use the toilet, she was told to "just do it in bed" because she was wearing a continence aid, which violated her human dignity.

It took some time before I realized that Mum wasn't being given any food or fluid. Mum said "It is against the law to starve people you know." I made a special broth for Mum and gave her some and left the rest in the fridge but no one fed it to her. When my daughter, Michelle, visited Mum she was saying "I'm thirsty, I'm thirsty..." Michelle gave her sips to drink which Mum swallowed without difficulty. By the time I realised that Mum wasn't being given food and fluids, she had become very weak. I went to the kitchen and asked why my mother wasn't receiving her special drinks. The person in the kitchen said they "don't give them anything in palliative care" Once when I went in early to visit Mum said she was hungry. When I asked the staff if Mum had been offered something to eat I was told "We just don't have time in the morning, we have to get all these people up and dressed and into the dining room." What was my Mum paying for?

Mum's legs were becoming increasingly weak and painful. I had to call for someone to turn her as the pain in her legs caused her so much distress. One night when I was there Mum said "I can't stand this pain." I searched two floors before I found a nurse or carer; she said "I feel so sorry for your mother" She gave Mum a Panadol.

Another time I had to ask for Mum to be turned, I had to leave the room and couldn't watch because Mum was in so much agony. The next day I went to the office and told them I wanted my mother to be hydrated. There was a doctor there, Dr. McMahon, who agreed to hydrate Mum. He said he would go and see her. I decided to go and see Mum's doctor, Dr Michael at the Glenroy clinic. The clinic was busy but the doctor took me into a room and told me he would give Mum hydration. But Mum died the next day. The hydration was unused on her bedside table. A few days before she passed away they gave her a large dose of morphine. She was unconscious when I went to see her. I only wanted them to alleviate her pain. She had tried to talk me the last time I saw her while she was still conscious, but was only able to move her mouth.

I know that some time has passed since, but I will always be deeply troubled by the memory of my mother's last weeks, and the unnecessary suffering she went through. I believe that Monterey Aged Care facility was negligent in it's failure to provide my mother with appropriate pain relief, sustenance and hydration. I also believed that they failed to consult with me, consider my wishes and religious beliefs, and to keep me adequately informed about the palliative care process.

Yours Sincerely,

Christine Royal.

Ph.

Mobile: