

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR**

ACTION REFERRAL

TO <i>Hess</i>	DATE <i>4-8-13</i>
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER <p align="center">000323</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>cc: Mr. Heck, Kost, Cleared 4/22/13, letter attached</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>4-17-13</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

FAX COVER SHEET



South Carolina House of Representatives
The office of Representative J. Roland Smith
FAX #: (803) 734-8795

DATE: April 8, 2013

TO: Ms. Jan

FROM: Representative Roland Smith

FAX NUMBER: 803-255-8235

MESSAGE: If you have any questions or need any further information, please call me at 803-734-3115. Thank you.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL OF THE PAGES, PLEASE CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE J. ROLAND SMITH'S OFFICE AT (803) 734-3115.

RECEIVED

APR 08 2013

Department of Health & Human Services
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 26, 2013

Representative J. Roland Smith
183 Edgar St.
Warrenville, SC 29851

Rep. J. Roland Smith:

You may not be aware, but we have a major problem in the great state of South Carolina. I never knew this problem existed until I had to experience it myself. I pray you will take the time to read, relate, and respond to my plea of help for my family and others.

My Mom, Ella Ruth Bush, was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease years ago. She was a resident of National Health Care (NHC) nursing home from September 11, 2009 until January 3, 2013 when she took ill with Pneumonia. She was sent to University Hospital in Augusta, GA on January 3, 2013 due to complications with breathing. She was put on the Ventilator in the Emergency Room then sent to I.C.U. She was in I.C.U. for weeks. A Tracheotomy was done. It was decided by my Father and me to keep the Trach in my Mom's throat as explained to us at University Hospital it would be a benefit to my Mom. Since my Mom has Parkinson's disease it causes her to create a lot of secretions in her mouth. Because my Mom is weak, she's not able to release the secretions on her own to avoid aspiration which leads to Pneumonia. She was then transferred to Select Specialty Hospital of Augusta, GA where she received a permanent feeding tube, was weaned off the Ventilator, and began breathing on her own.

After excellent care from University Hospital and Select Specialty Hospital and much progress in my Mom's health, **THE NIGHTMARE BEGAN.**

We were told NHC, the nursing home my Mom had come to know and love as home, don't take patients with a Trach. My Mom would not be allowed to go back to NHC. That was bad news. The news gets worse. There are only a few nursing homes that took patients with a Trach. Our choices were limited. We had the choice of sending my Mom 2 - 3 hours away from us in some part of Georgia, or sending my Mom to a nursing home in our local area with one of the worst reputations ever, UniHealth Post Acute Care of North Augusta, SC. We didn't have much of a choice but to send her to UniHealth of North Augusta with it being 10 minutes from where I live in North Augusta and 20 min from where my Father lives in Jackson, SC. My Mom arrived at UniHealth on Monday, February 18, 2013 around 5:30 p.m. My Father and I were there to make sure she got settled in and to answer any questions of the nursing staff. The next day I went to visit my Mom after work around 5:30. I found her in her bed struggling to breathe, sweat all over her face, and secretions coming out of her Trach. She had so much secretion coming out of her Trach, it had her gown wet and her oxygen mask filled with thick foamy secretion. After going to the nursing station I found out my Mom had not been suctioned since 1:30 p.m. that afternoon. It was 5:30. Someone dropped the ball and did not suction my Mom as often as they should have to let her get in that condition. Unfortunately my Mom was sent to the Emergency Room that evening and admitted into University Hospital where she stayed for over a week and then transferred to Select Specialty Hospital until this present date and is back on the Ventilator.

The worst thing is, once my Mom is released from Select Specialty Hospital, she will have to go back to UniHealth of North Augusta.

This is where your help is needed. What can you do to help my family and others not to have to experience this? It's sad enough to have a sick loved one. Then when they have a Trach to benefit their health, there is no respectful or decent nursing home to send them to. Family members are left with limited choices that include throwing your loved one in any old dump that will take them.

Please take the time to imagine me taking my Mom from a 4-Star nursing home to a 2-Star nursing home. Then to only be in the 2-Star nursing home one day and not get the care she deserves.

UniHealth of North Augusta has a new Director, Mr. Luther Reeves, who has been on the job less than six months. Mr. Reeves has been very active in trying to make things better. Mr. Reeves has been a great support. However, the heart ache my Mom and our family has had to experience in this matter is worth your attention. All of this happened because it benefits my Mom's health to have a Trach.

I think all nursing homes in this great state of South Carolina should have the equipment and trained staff to take patients with a Trach. The door should not be closed on these patients. Families should not have to throw their loved ones in a dump and pray they get the proper care.

I can be reached at: 1115 Lake Greenwood Dr.
North Augusta, SC 29841
C# (803) 270-2151
psullivan@scana.com

Desperate to make a difference,


Pamella L. Sullivan



Log letter 000323

Anthony E. Keck • Director
Nikki R. Haley • Governor

April 22, 2013

Pamela L. Sullivan
1115 Lake Greenwood Drive
North Augusta, South Carolina 29841

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

This letter is in response to your recent correspondence to Representative J. Roland Smith's office regarding the limited number of South Carolina nursing facilities with ventilator units. In addition, you expressed concern over the quality of care provided at UniHealth Post Acute Care – North Augusta. Based on your letter, your mother was admitted to UniHealth Post Acute Care – North Augusta ventilator unit due to her need for tracheotomy care. Shortly after admission, your mother was readmitted to the hospital due to inadequate tracheotomy care provided at the nursing facility.

In reference to the number of nursing facilities that provide care to persons who are ventilator dependent, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) launched a program in July 2012 to assist nursing facilities in providing care to persons with complex care needs. Tracheotomy care meets this definition. We are excited about the Complex Care Program and have approximately 20% of Medicaid certified nursing facilities participating. We look forward to working with more facilities as we understand the need for more nursing facilities to address this problem. For a complete list of nursing facilities and bed availabilities, you may access the South Carolina Nursing Facility Bed Locator website, NFBL.SC.GOV. Currently we are making modifications to this website to identify which facilities participate in the Complex Care Program.

We have forwarded your concerns regarding the care at UniHealth Post Acute Care – North Augusta to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) Bureau of Survey and Certification for follow-up. SCDHEC is the State Agency responsible for oversight of quality of care for long term care facilities.

We appreciate this opportunity to help with this matter. Thank you for your continued support of the South Carolina Healthy Connections Program. If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact Nicole Mitchell-Threatt at (803) 898-2689.

Sincerely,

Roy E. Hess
Deputy Director

REH/t

Cc: Representative J. Roland Smith