

Dear Governor Haley,

First let me start off by saying that I know you have been extremely busy with the tragic event that happened in Charleston; I applaud you for your stance on the Confederate flag. I am sending this letter in reference to a facility where my brother resided until his death. The facility caters to those who are mentally challenged as well as physically challenged. The name of this facility is Whitten Center and is located on Hwy. US 76 Clinton, SC.

The reason for this letter is that my brother, Parnell Fuller Jr., had been a resident there for the past 22 years and he recently passed, on March 21, 2015 at Greenville Memorial Hospital. On my visits there, to this facility to see my brother, I had noticed the decline of the quality of staff members there. Every time I went to visit my brother, staff members were noticed sitting on couches or chairs watching TV "with" the residents. Granted my brother, like most of the individuals who probably could care less about what was on the television, would be sitting in their modified wheelchairs with their heads either down because of their inability to keep their heads up or laid back on a headrest on their wheelchairs, for those who simply would not do well with their heads being down. The staff or caregivers in my brother's unit which is simply known as 207, I would think that these people would know how to at least pretend to give a damn when family members show up to visit their loved ones. They would smile, maybe and speak but wouldn't bother to say anything to you about your family member's attitude for that day, well being or anything, and the same could be said for the "nurses" in the unit as well. This is supposed to be the unit where medically fragile individuals go who require different medicines on a regular basis. Vigilance is also required because of the chances for getting pneumonia and the frequency of seizures (like my brother) and asphyxia. This is supposed to be a unit that gives these individuals some kind of quality of life.

When I would want to speak to the medical staff about my brother's health since the last time I saw him or asked how he's been doing that day, I would get very general answers like "he's doing fine". If I asked about his medicines and if the doctor has changed anything, I would get "no everything's pretty much the same".

A lot has changed with the quality of the doctors, nurses and certainly the staff since he went there in December of 1993. When my brother got sick, this time, and had to be rushed to Laurens County Hospital on, I believe March the 10, 2015; the employee that accompanied my brother to the hospital looked, to me like someone who was a meth user. Her teeth were decayed and her entire appearance was startling. My first thought was; "this is what's taking care of people like my brother"? When we, the siblings, were finally allowed to go back and see him, he was on a ventilator. We had never seen him this sick before, he had never been on a ventilator before; and he has had some very trying times in his 47 yrs. We were told when they went in to check on my brother that morning at the facility he was discovered unresponsive, so they called the EMS. This after QIDP, Shantel Dieter who is also PN, said that he had a temperature of 92 the night before. Big warning sign . . . anybody should know this is not right,

this is not normal. However she decided that she would just "wait and see". She did not call the family members until the morning he was found unresponsive. After my brother remained at this hospital for approximately a week, we decide he should be moved to Greenville Memorial Hospital on the CCU floor. It was discovered at the Laurens Hospital that my brother had MRSA, again. He had had a bout with this in November or December of 2014 and was treated at the Greenville Memorial Hospital. We later discovered his roommate had just gotten over a bout with this same illness. So when he was released in 2014, he went back to the same room, with the same roommate. I don't know if the room was cleaned or anything, but judging from the appearance of the staff and the nonchalant attitude of the medical staff, I can't see that happening.

This time, after being moved to GMH for about 4 days, the doctors told us he was not getting any better and his system simply was not able to fight all the battles with the diseases raging within his body. All the siblings agreed that on March 21, 2015 we would let them remove him from the ventilator. Shortly, very shortly after that was done, he passed away. Later, after the arrangements and burial, within a couple of weeks, we received his death certificate. In it, it stated that the causes of his death were ARDS, Aspiration: Pneumonia E-coli, Enterococcal Septicemia and septic shock. These are things that come about over a period of time. These are not things that you wake up with or in my brother's case, don't wake up with. To me, that says sanitation is not being practiced and someone's cleaning a person's backside with a towel and then turning around using the same towel to clean something else, and in turn spreading the E-coli. The fact that these diseases were present simply boggles my mind.

Shortly after, on March 23, 2015 around 10 am, I was contacted by someone who is in the field of the special needs; and he promised he would investigate and look into how the facility was being run, in particular the unit my brother was in. I have not heard from that person since; I don't even remember his name. However, I strongly feel, something should be done about this facility and the quality of the employees there, from the very top all the way to the hands on level (the hands on level in particular).

If I or my siblings had the finances, we would have gladly kept our brother at home with us and paid for private nurses and healthcare employees. We are blue collar workers, most of us, and this was simply not feasible, but we never thought that the facility we put him in to start with would fall so dramatically with the level quality and care that it has.

In my closing of this letter I would also like to state that after our brother passed, an older sibling placed a call to Whitten Center to let them know that he had passed away, and the first thing the QIDP asked was "was it a natural death?". I found that odd as well as infuriating that she had the audacity to let that come out of her mouth, with all the failings that occurred on her watch in her unit, unit 207. Something needs to be done about her and others. They should know that these individuals do have families that care about them and that they can't just come to the funeral with kind words and pat your hands with phony concern.

I would appreciate a response to my letter and attention to this matter. Thanking you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Regina J. Jenkins