

WINE NEWS

SA nursing home blocks daughters' unsupervised visits with dying mother

ABC North and West SA By Sowaibah Hanifie

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PHOTO: The sisters say they've been barred from seeing their mum without supervision. (Supplied)

Two sisters say they've been left traumatised by a decision to limit their access to their dying mother after a dispute with her nursing home in regional South Australia.

The sisters, Catherine Loran and Sylvia Mullan, have been sole carers for their mother, 86-year-old Doreen Loran, for a decade and feel the issue arose after they complained about the home's "disgusting" level of care.

After a bitter dispute with her Port Augusta-based aged care provider, Edenfield Family Care Nerrilda, the sisters said they'd been limited to just two one-hour supervised visits per week.

Ms Loran has dementia and breast cancer and has been given months to live.

"It's like mum's a prisoner, not a resident," Ms Mullan said.

"It's really, really sad to think my mum's end of life has become a battle of when we can see her next."

In November, the nursing home's managers successfully sought to have the daughters' guardianship over their mother removed, but the sisters appealed against this ruling.

Instead, the Office of the Public Advocate has been charged with making decisions about her care.

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Key points:

- Two sisters in SA concerned about the quality of care their mother receives say they have been banned from seeing her unsupervised
- Doreen Loran's daughters are worried that they won't get to spend enough time with her before she dies
- The nursing home has accused the pair of abusing and intimidating its staff

The OPA has been in regular contact with the home, advocating for the daughters to have access to their mother several times a week and receive updates on her health.

After a week of back-and-forth emails, the home increased their visits from one hour a week to two hours.

Other members of Doreen Loran's family continue to receive unsupervised access.



PHOTO: Catherine Loran says she and her sister have been barred from seeing their gravely ill mother, Doreen Loran, without supervision. (Supplied)

Ongoing fight to see their mother regularly

The order to remove guardianship from the sisters was made after months of disagreements between the sisters and the care facility's managers over their mother's care.

The sisters have accused Edenfield of providing substandard care, while the home's owners have accused the sisters of abusing and intimidating nursing home staff.

"You could see her coccyx bone through the bedsores and her muscles in her backside," Ms Loran said.

"Generally, she was all full of faeces. We had to change her. There were no wipes in the home, we were providing those.

"The staff were providing wipes; they were going to Big W, buying all the wipes and keeping them in their lockers."

"There was one particular time we went and saw mum and I actually stood there with my jacket over my nose because I couldn't stand the smell," she said.



PHOTO: Sylvia Mullan is worried she won't see enough of her mother, who is dying. (Supplied)

In February last year, an unannounced federal audit was conducted after the daughters contacted the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission with concerns about their mother's care.

The audit found Edenfield Family Care Nerrilda had failed to meet nine of 44 aged care standards, pertaining to issues with the home's clinical and skin care, behaviour management, privacy and dignity.

An announced audit in September saw the home meet all of those standards.

Edenfield's lawyers have accused the sisters of "often abusive, physically intimidating and disrespectful behaviour to staff", "unauthorised use of the facilities medical equipment" and attempting to interfere in clinical care decisions made by the facility regarding their mother and other residents.

Ms Mullan said the home sent lawyers' letters threatened to limit their visiting rights when she continued to file complaints to the commission about the home's standards.

"I continue to report the level of care, that mum still wasn't being repositioned, about the wounds, and even reported in May the use of syringes that were being left out long periods of time... they weren't being changed," she said.

"It wasn't just about our mother. It was about everybody. All of the older people there and being a voice for them, as well as a voice for the staff. The staff were confiding in us."

In response to an extensive list of questions, Edenfield's owner El-Jasbella Nerrilda Pty Ltd told the ABC it "has no comment to make in respect of the matters raised".

Painful separation experienced by many other families

Despite fears of legal action, Ms Mullan said she and her sister were determined to tell their story to change the circumstance of other families experiencing similar problems.

"Nobody seems to be able to help in this situation. It's a hopelessness and a helplessness and you get very emotional about it and you don't seem to see any light at the end of the tunnel," she said.

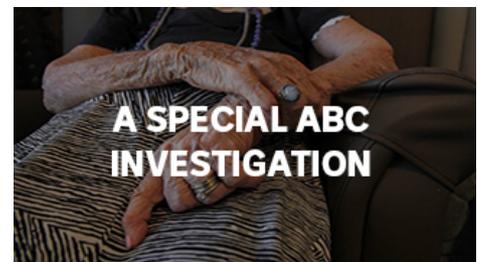
SA Centre Alliance Senator Rex Patrick said there were many other families in similar circumstances with different nursing homes across his electorate.

"I have had other constituents who've contacted me and expressed similar concerns and for that reason we need to find a remedy that doesn't have to involve lawyers and commissioners," he said.

"What we need to have in these sorts of situations is some form of mediation available where people can get into a room with professionals where a common pathway can be found that allows people to see their families.

"The aged care commissioner has an obligation to maintain standards, that's something different to making sure that family needs are met."

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