

From: [Joe Bukowski](#)
To: [DPH.HFSRB](#); [Roate, George](#); [Constantino, Mike](#)
Subject: [External] #25-031 Oak Hill Senior Living and Rehabilitation Center, Waterloo
Date: Monday, October 13, 2025 4:22:40 PM

My name is **Joseph Bukowski**, and I have been a resident at **Oak Hill** for the past two years. My wife, **Linda**, was also a resident for about nine months until she passed away from painful bone cancer. Throughout our entire time here, we received the utmost professional and courteous care from the entire staff. Their compassion, dedication, and support have meant a great deal to both of us—and to me personally.

I transferred to **Oak Hill** from a religious-run nursing home in St. Louis, Missouri, specifically because of Oak Hill's strong reputation and its **4-star rating** from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). I was seeking a facility known for excellence, and Oak Hill has more than lived up to that standard. From the moment I arrived, I felt the difference. The staff are attentive, compassionate, and professional. The environment is welcoming and well-maintained, and the level of care I've received has exceeded my expectations. Oak Hill doesn't just meet the benchmarks—it sets them. Choosing Oak Hill was one of the best decisions I've made for my health and well-being. I'm proud to call it home.

As I am a paraplegic, it often fell upon the staff to provide much of the care that I was unable to give my wife myself. During her final weeks, when she was in great pain and needed more than the usual attention, the supervisors made sure that the dietary staff, rehab department, housekeepers, nurses, and CNAs, etc were all especially attentive and present for her care. And during her last two days Linda was checked every two hours. Their teamwork and genuine concern brought comfort during an incredibly difficult time, and I will always be grateful for their kindness and commitment.

I do not believe that a **for-profit organization** would be willing or able to provide the same level of compassionate, personalized care that we received at Oak Hill under its current county ownership.

At present, **Oak Hill** holds a **4-star rating** from the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**. In comparison:

- **Accolade Healthcare of Pontiac** currently holds a **3-star rating** (out of 5),
- **Accolade Healthcare of Savoy** also holds a **1-star rating**,
- **Accolade Healthcare of Danville** has a **2-star rating**, and
- **Accolade Healthcare Overall** has **2.1 star rating vs the national**

average of 2.9 vs Oak Hills 4. In staffing, the contrast is even starker: Accolade averages 1.7 stars, with a National average of 2.9 while Oak Hill maintains a 4-star rating. These numbers reflect real differences in care quality and resident outcomes. I have provided internet links below to identify the source of this data.

It does not take much reflection to recognize that for-profit organizations often prioritize profit over quality of care. The difference in both experience and outcomes speaks for itself.

To add to these concerns, **Accolade** proposes to place a nursing home administrator with only **three years of nursing home experience** in charge of Oak Hill. In their own welcoming letter, (attached below) they state that he is “excited to work with the current experienced staff.” That phrasing alone should give us pause—because it implies that Accolade is depending on the very people they may soon displace or overburden, rather than bringing the depth of experience our residents deserve. Oak Hill is more than a facility—it is a community built on trust, compassion, and excellence. I urge you to consider the lived experiences of residents like myself and the legacy of care that Oak Hill represents. We must not allow short-term financial interests to compromise the dignity and well-being of those who call this place home.

According to his own [LinkedIn profile](#), this administrator lists prior nursing homes experience at only two other facilities: first as an **assistant administrator at Hillside Rehab and Healthcare Center**, which currently holds a **1-star CMS rating**, and then at **La Bella of Edwardsville**, which also has amassed another spectacular **1-star rating**. His tenure at Hillside lasted **1 year and 9 months**, and at La Bella **1 year and 1 month**. Is this how he leads with “confidence, clarity, and compassion,” as stated in the attached letter—by leaving two nonperforming facilities without improvement, only to join another under-performing **Accolade 2.1 star** for-profit system? Are we to believe that such leadership will now uplift and preserve a **4-star**, county-run **Oak Hill** or starts a continuous decline that decimates **Oak Hill** and its residents and loyal employees?

Equally concerning is Accolade’s approach to resident communication. The sole meeting scheduled with residents regarding this significant administrative change was held on Thursday, October 9, at 6 PM when many residents were already in bed. This scheduling choice effectively excluded some of the most vulnerable individuals from participating in a discussion that directly affects their lives. A weekend meeting would have been far more inclusive and respectful of residents’ needs and family availability.

Since Accolade has repeatedly stated that communication is a priority, one has to wonder if this was an **intentional action**. After having been in discussions with the county for many months, Accolade's failure to engage residents and staff sooner has only fueled anxiety and rumors throughout the facility. Such an approach does not demonstrate transparency or respect for the people whose daily lives will be most impacted by this potential transition.

These facts speak volumes about the type of leadership and operational standards that Accolade brings to its facilities. **Oak Hill's residents, families, staff and the Monroe County Taxpayers deserve far better** than to have their home and their care placed in the hands of a for-profit chain with a record of poor ratings and limited nursing home administrative experience. Please deny the lease and give us the opportunity to persuade the Monroe County Board to reconsider a public referendum allowing the county residents to vote and determine if they want local ownership to be retained.

CMS Ratings (Source: Medicare.gov):

Hillside <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/265585?id=33e23578-bc99-41a4-8cbe-3d788d6ba7ee&state=MO>

LA Bella <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/145846?state=IL>

Pontiac <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/146010/view-all?state=IL>

Savoy <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/145439/view-all?state=IL>

Danville <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/145243/view-all?state=IL>

ACCOLADE HEALTHCARE OVERALL

<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/chains/7>

Oak Hill <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/145445?city=Waterloo&state=IL&zipcode=62298>

Respectfully,
Joseph Bukowski

Resident, Oak Hill

623 Hamacher

Waterloo IL 62298

charterbackup@gmail.com



Oak Hill
623 Hamacher Street
Waterloo, IL 62298
P: 618-939-3488

Dear Residents, Families, and Friends,

Oak Hill's team is thrilled to welcome **Eli Kamins** as the new Administrator of Oak Hill Senior Living and Rehabilitation.

Eli brings with him three years of experience as a nursing home administrator and a strong background in healthcare leadership. He has played key roles in guiding a successful healthcare acquisition, demonstrating his ability to lead with confidence, clarity, and compassion. Residing in St. Louis with his family, Eli is excited to join the Oak Hill team and is eager to work alongside our experienced staff to continue delivering exceptional care to our residents.

We would like to extend an invitation to our families and friends to join us in welcoming Eli to the Oak Hill Team on October 9th. Eli will be joined by Accolade Healthcare representatives, which will allow for introductions followed by a Q & A session for family members. Please give us a call with any questions regarding this event.

Thank you,

Accolade Healthcare Team

You're Invited!

Meet Our New Administrator, Eli, and the Accolade Healthcare Team

 **Thursday, October 9th**

 **6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

 **Oak Hill – Activity Room**

Come enjoy light refreshments, connect with our team, and help us celebrate this exciting new chapter for Oak Hill!

623 Hamacher St., Waterloo, IL 62298 ♦ Phone: (618) 939-3488 Fax: (618) 939-5030
oakhillmonroecounty.com