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HEALTH FACILITIES
COMMISSION REVIEW BOARD

25-031

Illinois Healthcare Facilities and Review Board

525 W. Jefferson St. (2nd Floor)

Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Sir:

I am writing concerning the decision of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners to lease the management and later sell Oak Hill, Waterloo, IL. to Accolade Healthcare.

My Grandfather, George Altes, was on the Monroe County Board of Commissioners when it was decided to get rid of the Alms House (also known as the Poor House) and build the Monroe County Nursing Home so care can be given to all people regardless of their pay status. My Grandfather was very proud of this decision until he died in 1976 at the age of 99 ½ years old.

After many years, the name was changed to Monroe County Care and Rehab because many older people thought that if you went into a nursing home, you stayed until you died. When the name changed, people realized that they could get the care that they needed and possibly return to their home.

As time went by, the building needed a lot of upgrades to meet State Regulations, and it would be very costly, so they decided to build a new facility and call it Oak Hill.

I am 77 years old and have lived in Monroe County all my life except the 3 years I went to Jewish Hospital School of Nursing in St. Louis. Several years ago, I voted to increase our taxes so we could keep our county run nursing facility.

I have worked as a Registered Nurse at Monroe County Care and Rehab for 33 years, 3 months, 2 weeks, and 3 days on the night shift, day shift, Medicare and Care Plan Nurse, and finally as the Assistant Director of Nursing so I am aware of what it takes to run a home. There have been a lot of RN, LPN, CNA, Dietary, Housekeeping, Maintenance, and Volunteers who have worked 10, 20, plus years until retirement. They did this for a reason – they cared for the Residents and the Facility. Many went the extra mile to help the

Residents. For example: While I was there they started the Gift Shop where the Residents could purchase some clothes, snacks, cards, etc, for very little money. For many of these Residents, this was the only shopping they could do where they could pick out what they wanted. When my Mother passed, I donated many of her good clothes, coats, sweaters, jewelry, etc to the shop and as many other people did. I have heard that the shop was closed.

We also started the program where the Residents could choose off a menu what they wanted for the meals. It took a lot of cooperation of all Staff to accomplish this. I did not realize the difference it made until I visited my Aunt in a Private Facility. I arrived at 1:30 pm and all the Residents were in the dining room. They were getting their lunch plates. Every one had the same thing on it and it did not fill up the plate. Several Residents at this table said that they did not like the food, but they ate it so they wouldn't be hungry. There was no other selection.

This is only a few examples of what our Facility was like.

I heard rumors recently that some people were not happy with the care, that we were having money problems, repairs were not being made, etc. I know that not everyone can be pleased so I would tell them to go to the Administrator. I thought the Board of Commissioners were taking care of this. When I worked there, we had an Advisory Board made up of Community leaders, business owners, religious leaders, etc. who would help give suggestions as to what can be done. I have been told that this was dissolved during the COVID pandemic.

Nothing has been said about leasing out the management and selling the COUNTY OWNED AND RUN Facility. This was not decided overnight. It has been going on for some time. Why didn't they let the people in the county know what they had in mind. Could they have asked some of us who had worked there if we could help with any suggestions on what they needed to do? Several of us have asked around and no one knew about it until now. They didn't even advertise for the Administrator – one did not have a license.

Now we are going from a county home to a Private run home. Where we are losing money now, they will now need to make a profit. How do they plan on doing this? Increase the room rates? Cut Staff and supplies, neglect needed repairs? Give the minimal care because we are low on Staff and supplies? Limit the amount of Medicaid Residents? When the original home was built, it was for everyone no matter what their pay status was. Will they put the Medicaid Residents, like other Private run facilities, +

on one hall and when it is full, they will only take private pay. AND then everyone will know who no longer can pay for their care because they are ON that specific hall. The way we do

it now, no one knows the pay status of the Residents except the office and the Nurses who needs to send someone to the hospital. Then the Resident will be worrying about what they will have to do when their money runs out. Move to THAT hall, find a new facility? Now that is a Dignity Issue! I know my Mother went to Independent Living and she was very worried about running out of money even though we explained to her that was not a problem.

What about the Alzheimer Residents? I have been told that they will be closing that wing. This wing is designed so that the Residents can roam the halls on that wing and can go into other rooms without being told they have to stay out of there. What about the activities that are appropriate for these Residents? Will they have to move to a different facility? I am not sure where there is one close so family can visit.

What about Magnolia Terrace, assistant living? I was told that Acccolade did not want to manage it? I am sure those Residents are worried where they will go.

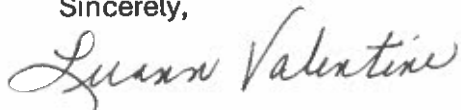
The County Commissioners knew when they ran for this office that Oak Hill was a part of their job just like the maintenance of the road, financial obligations, and many, many other aspects of their job.

What do you do when you take on a job and you don't know how to do something? YOU LEARN. YOU ASK QUESTIONS FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE. You don't just sweep it under the rug and sell it.

Please reconsider the leasing of Oak Hill to Accolade. I think this would be a very big mistake. The Board of Commissioners need to put some effort into what needs to be done or maybe they should resign.

I don't want to lose the good Facility we have. Someday I may need to go there, too.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Luann Valentine".

Luann Valentine

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