

Save Oak Hill from Ruin

As I sit here contemplating what to say, I genuinely would have never thought we would end up in this predicament. Trying to find the right words and arguments to save a place that we dearly love when you feel like the rug has been pulled out from under you feels devastating. A handful of people made this decision secretly for hundreds without their knowledge and voice. A decision for a whole community that elected them for that matter. We had to fight for a chance to be heard after plans were already in the making. In my 15 years of employment, I should be able to name and recognize each of these people deciding my fate but I can count on one hand the amount of encounters I've had with them combined. That's inexcusable. They don't want to take responsibility for what they grossly lacked being elected to do.

As I write this, there are many questions that continue to remain unanswered and many uncertainties that hang in the air. I can only speak on the things that I know and the things I have already experienced. "Why make a lot of changes when you guys already have such a great reputation," is what we are told but yet things are changing all the way down to the uniforms we wear.

One of the greatest benefits of being an Oak Hill employee is having an IMRF. People apply to just have that benefit alone. That's our retirement and our future that is being taken away from us. This is such a devastating loss for people who have yet to be vested.

Vacation/sick/AB days are also a great benefit of being an Oak Hill employee. These days are drastically reduced if Accolade takes over. Employees can only accrue up to 3 weeks of vacation. With this take-over, I already lose 5 days of vacation that I have worked so hard to achieve. No AB days are granted for good attendance which is a good incentive for people to have.

Sign on bonuses won't be honored.

Staff will be forced to buy Accolade scrubs, specific colors for each department. This makes things more institutionalized. This is supposed to be their home, not a hospital setting. Each day I have a resident comment on the fun shirts we are able to wear.

The commissioners say that we don't accept more complex residents such as tracheostomies, complex wounds, dialysis, etc. We are a nursing home, not Kindred hospital. We are not a psych ward, we are a nursing home. Taking anyone and anything would make the quality of care decrease. Big corporations like this are about money and not patient care. We are not Walmart, we want to be a mom and pop shop. A place you go where you know you'll be taken care of.

Since the decision, partnerships have been terminated such as the one with the local senior center. We would support this establishment and endorse Bingo games, for example, all the time. One of the very things that make a community, gone.

During the short time of being managed by Accolade, there are already red flags that have been observed. For example, there are certain protocols that are in place for residents that are more at risk of infection and need increased measures to help protect them. Obviously, this needs to be known to employees that come to work with us but without compromising their integrity. Putting carts outside these resident's rooms and putting these residents names on a highlighted paper outside is HIPPA violation 101. One resident noted this change and was very upset feeling like he is being singled out and picked on. This is their home! They should feel comfortable and safe.

We started in the dark and continue to be in the dark about our future.

I have been employed and grown with Oak Hill for 15 years. This is my home and my residents home, not Accolades.

Respectfully,

Sara Decker