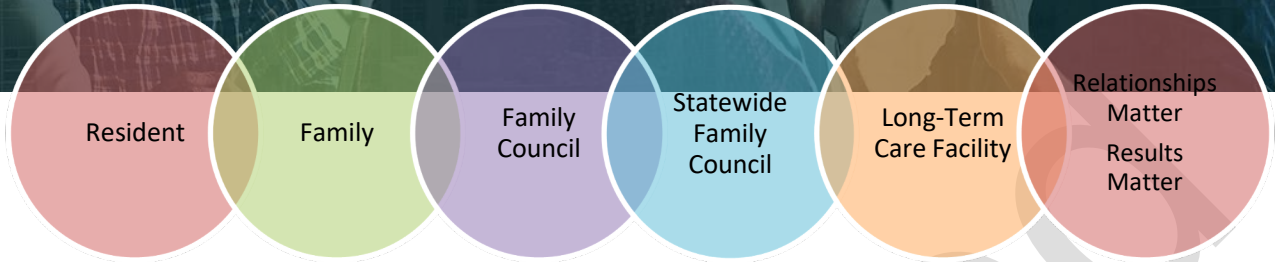


Connecticut Statewide Family Council



MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022

A Meeting of the CT State Family Council (CTSFC) was held on May 24, 2022, via Zoom.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by Co-Chair, Cynthia Hadden

Co-Chair, Cynthia Hadden opened the meeting welcoming all in attendance and shared their appreciation for their interest in the Connecticut State Family Council (CTSFC). Cynthia and Amy welcomed all new members.

PRESENT Cynthia Hadden Co-Chair, Amy Badini Co-Chair, Rick (Frederick) Kaeser Vice Chair, Robin DeLieto Recording Secretary, Valerie Gilberti, Eileen Shapiro, Liz Stern,, Lynn Sobol, Andrea Elliot, Tom Canellakis, and Sheilah Smith

Cynthia introduced and welcomed New Members: Elisabeth Quigley and Candance Ramirez

Motion to Accept the Minutes of April 26, 2022: Amy. **Second** Val. Motion passed unanimously by those present.

Guest speaker - Sheilah Smith, Co Chair, Nathaniel Witherell Family Council

Nathaniel Witherell is the only nursing home owned by the Town. Motivation for involvement with the Family Council came from March 2020 - COVID lockdown, a new Management Team at facility, and a new 1st Selectman. Two weeks after there was no response from 1st Selectman, Suzanne Brown introduced her to Amy. Facility previously had a Family Council. Town had political pressure to outsource. By July 2020, there were major issues at the facility. They began to hold Family Council meetings and that's how the new council came about. Main focus in the beginning was COVID related issues and the isolation. FC kicked off the Isolation Kills Rally. Current focus is on resident engagement. Volunteers have still not returned to the facility. As other facilities, staffing shortages are a problem. Staff

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are Town employees. For example, for 40 residents, there was 1 CNA. COVID bonus money for staff (RN/LPN/CNA) hasn't been paid out. Facility is in a 2nd COVID lockdown (10 days) limiting resident movement and visitation. COVID patients were not being quarantined. Staff very upset about this.

The FC has not been asked to sit at the table with management. No signage for Lockdown wing. There is a lack of communication. The residents are the ones that are suffering. Staff is amazing but the management is bad. Hoping for change. If people are not willing to work in the trenches, nothing will change. Need other family members to dig in. DPH surveyor said that you need to file a complaint if you want the facility to change.

When they first began FC, meetings were held every other week. Now they are meeting once every 3 weeks. The email distribution list is kept private from Management. Members do not want any retaliation for their participation. Have 10-12 members. Bulletin Board in lobby has FC brochures although bulletin board is not located in a friendly space. There are no requirements for management to meet with the FC.

Amy - How can you build a partnership with families and facilities? Admissions package should have Family Council information included and then to follow-up a month after the initial admission.

Cindy - Resident rights should also be included in Admissions package.

Sheilah - Meetings are now by ZOOM. One meeting was done in her backyard. Meetings will be going to once a quarter. Here to improve the quality of residents lives. A Town Board member is assigned to the Family Council. Showed Board member through facility. Residents sitting around with nothing to do but wait for dinner. There were 18 positive cases that day. Want to know why there is no agency staff to fill in when staff short.

A member mentioned that an email from Ombudsman said that facilities are trying to get staff from agencies however, agencies will book one person for 5 different facilities and then gives person to "highest bidder". Several of the articles published are interesting with links in email.

Short staff is an emergency measure and the Medical National Guard should be deployed to fill in.

Cindy asked if there is there a level of fear that if staffing is so low that a facility may close so families won't complain? Responses, yes this is a valid fear as most worry about where their loved one will be placed. In fact, staff in some LTCF are being told by management to not share staffing numbers. Nor are they updating their daily staffing charts. Some facilities don't update the charts daily as required.

One member commented that COVID money would show staff that they are valued and respected. They were told that they shouldn't talk to her or answer any questions. Management retaliation.

The Chairs of the Committee discussed an amendment to the CTSFC By-laws to allow a member whose loved one passes to be able to remain on the Statewide Council after their loved one passes. These individuals have far more experience with LTCF and AL Facilities than a new member. The purpose of the CT State Family Council is for Advocacy and even testimony before Legislature. It also offers guidance and compassion and an avenue to help those new to LTCF to know their rights on behalf of their loved one. These members would not have a fear of retaliation since their loved one has passed.

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Liz is researching to see where this is stated. A member is invaluable to support and share knowledge acquired. You want to honor your loved one by continuing the fight.

Eileen - Local is more engaged. Statewide agenda is broader. HIPPA shouldn't be an issue.

Cindy - Too often HIPPA regulations are misused.

Liz - "25 Common Nursing Home Problems and How to Resolve Them" under JusticInAging.org FC sadly know more of the legislative changes than the facilities. Asking people to be accountable. FC are educating others.

Rick - Roberts Rules of Order. Finding membership categories. Terms can be changed from 1 year to 2 years for example. What does it mean to be a member. Officers should complete term.

Tom - Prefer name not be used in minutes.

Cindy - Discussed with Secretary and future minutes we will not be using names. No fear of retaliation. Question asked about use of bed alarms allowed in nursing homes. Used in hospitals. Nursing homes don't use as they consider them as a type of restraint. Don't prevent falls, only notify staff that they are trying to get up. Asked Ombudsman to post questions/answers on site.

Lynn- Review when to wear a mask in a nursing home. As a visitor? If vaccinated or boosted? Sign in on an iPad when visiting and never see anyone sanitizing. Statewide standard?

Candance - Should be signage through out facility that staff and visitors should wear a mask at all times in facility when within resident areas. Vaccination very effective unless over 85 years old. Breakthrough cases. Copy of vaccination cards in folder. Protect against spread. Protect vulnerable population. Bed alarms in nursing homes not effective since not enough staff. By the time they get to resident, they are already on the floor. In hospital, rings to nurses station.

Cindy - Masked required unless outside or in a private room with both parties vaccinated.

Lynn - Staff must wear mask. Visitors wear mask in a Red Zone (positive cases).

Cindy - Rick created a guidance for Care Plan meetings from our Q & A with Ombudsman. Great document.

Rick - Look through and comment. Intended to be a guide booklet; questions to ask. Items in Blue are from personal knowledge/experience. A handbook that can possibly draw new members. Can add questions and references.

Liz - We live with the expectations that we can make a difference. We hope to build a good foundation although we may never see the house built. We are the soldiers.

Tom - Director of Nursing said they cannot give family member names. If someone expresses interest, form created for email to be given out.

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Cindy - Facility does not have to share. Regional Ombudsman can assist with having facility send out FC information. You can ask facility to schedule the 1st meeting.

The question was raised about what if retaliation does happen and as a result a loved one's care declines. Cindy responded that the first step would be to reach out to your Regional Ombudsman who will listen to your concerns and guide you to discuss your loved one's care if you feel it is a result of the Family Council involvement and file a DPH complaint which your Regional should also be able to assist you with.

There will be Legislative update at the next meeting, July 26, 2022, 7:00 pm

There is no June meeting. **Next meeting is July 26th at 7pm.** Mairead Painter, CT LTC Ombudsman will join us.

Motion to Adjourn: Rick. **Second:** Liz.

Meeting adjourned: 8:40pm

Respectfully submitted,
Robin DeLieto, Recording Secretary