

My name is Melissa Gibson I speak for my Late Mother. On May 2, 2020, My mother Linda Pichirallo went to community medical center Tom's River. I was prohibited from being physically present to advocate for her. She tested negative for COVID-19 and other infections.

During her hospitalization, I spoke with physicians and nurses daily, but I received conflicting and incomplete information. On May 9, a physician removed her IV.

After six days of unsuccessful attempts to obtain meaningful information, I went to the hospital. I presented a letter from the Governor stating that individuals who could not advocate for themselves because of cognitive impairment should be permitted to have a support person. Despite this, the hospital continued to deny me access.

After approximately an hour of discussion, I was eventually permitted to see my mother for five minutes. Before entering the elevator, I was required to turn off my cell phone because staff claimed that using it would violate my mother's privacy rights.

When I entered my mother's room, I immediately saw that she appeared seriously ill. Her arms were tightly wrapped around the bed rail, her fingertips were white, her complexion was gray, and she was shaking, moaning, and protruding her tongue. I expressed my concerns.

On May 16, my mother was transferred Arista care in Manchester NJ. In accordance with facility policy, she was tested for COVID-19. On May 18, I was told that she had tested positive but was asymptomatic.

On May 20, I was finally permitted to enter the facility. Her appearance changed so much in just days I didn't recognize her.

On May 28, the physician told me that my mother's prognosis was poor but did not provide a clear explanation for her deterioration.

My mother died on June 2, 2020

Months later, I obtained her medical records and learned that they documented dehydration and malnutrition. The facility had performed blood tests showing her decline. We were not informed of the seriousness of her condition, and the records did not show adequate intervention to rehydrate or nourish her.

Her death was initially recorded as "acute hypoxic respiratory failure due to COVID-19." However, the medical records did not support that conclusion.

After years of persistence, on July 16, 2026, I received a letter from the Chief State Medical Examiner and Pathologist stating that the original cause of death was incorrect and would be changed. My mother's death is now recorded as resulting from "complications of portal-caval atrophy due to dehydration and infection." COVID-19 was not identified as a

My mother was cognitively impaired and unable to advocate for herself. During her hospitalization and long-term-care placement, COVID-19 restrictions prevented me from being present, despite guidance and legal protections recognizing the need for support persons for individuals unable to communicate or advocate independently.

For six years, I have spent substantial personal funds and countless hours seeking answers and accountability. I have repeatedly encountered barriers, including claims that the statute of limitations has expired. Yet every factual statement I have made is supported by documentation, including medical records, correspondence, laboratory results, expert review, and the amended cause of death.

Covid 19 protocols hurt and killed many cognitively impaired and medically vulnerable patients as well as others desperately advocating for themselves.

Thank you for taking the time to review my family's experience and for helping bring attention to patients and families who suffered during the COVID-19 restrictions.