

**06/12/2020**

My mom and I have been struggling to find care for my 95 year old grandfather. After my grandmother passed away last year - I can't believe it's been almost a year, it still doesn't feel real - my grandpa has been declining pretty rapidly. They were married 72 years. He's been battling depression all his life and he's lost without my grandma.

My family lives several hours north of me and I was last there right before COVID-19 really kicked off in the first week of March. I had been visiting regularly, but I was not on a set schedule for it. My grandpa had been hospitalized and I wanted to make sure I visited. The day I was set to come back home he fell again and hit his back on a nearby table, breaking a couple ribs. I rushed to his house and then rushed him to the hospital where there were multiple signs warning of COVID-19. Back in March I didn't know how bad this was going to get, and it seemed so very far from my small rural hometown. I told both my mom and grandpa that I'd be back in a month.

Then COVID-19 shut everything down a few days after I got home. The drive home itself was slightly terrifying because I was so worried about the virus. My mom had to keep taking my grandpa to the hospital for various issues that never seemed to get resolved, but now she isn't allowed to go into the ER with him due to the virus. It's uncomfortable to wait for a loved one with no idea what's going on with their care and to be unable to comfort them as they wait, but I fully understand the restriction.

My grandpa never wanted to go into a home and made us promise never to put him in one, so it was shocking when he finally said he wanted to move into one. He previously wouldn't even agree to a life alert service. We were relieved because my mom had been having increasing difficulty keeping him safe and comfortable. However, it's been something of a trial to find a facility for him. The one that was recommended to me has a 40 person long waitlist, another I was told by several people was not very good (though it seemed like our only option), and the one run by the hospital was closed to new residents due to the virus. Getting a caregiver to come daily is prohibitively expensive, and it's kind of an uneasy feeling to let a stranger into your house to help care for your elderly relative during a pandemic. You think, what has their quarantine been like? Are they observing restrictions or being careless? Do they wear masks? Along with the usual worries of, are they going to treat my grandpa well or will they abuse him?

He had an anxious day on Tuesday and ended up falling 3 times. The 3rd time my mom had to call the fire department to help get him up and though they said he looked ok and was very aware for his age, he wanted to go to the hospital. They took him down there and they admitted him through Friday while they prepared to transfer him to short-term care. The doctor didn't think he

should go back home while he was so weak, so they're putting him into rehab while they help us find a safe situation for him. I'm so glad we finally have this support after all these ER trips and GP visits where they did basically nothing for him. He needs care and he needs emotional support and it felt like they just kept sending him off with nothing.

He's very stubborn and grouchy, so he's been so resistant to all of this until a week or two ago. He was taught to always keep a 'stiff upper lip' and brute force his way through bad times. I wish there was more I could do for him. I'm just glad the doctors are no longer ignoring him and are finally helping us secure long term care. I am extremely frustrated with his GP for brushing my mom's concerns and his failure/refusal to provide a referral for further care.

It's been very difficult helping with this from a distance as well. I feel like I should be there to help but I live in a city in California where there are many cases of the virus and I just don't feel good about potentially bringing it with me. I'm scared I'm going to lose the rest of my family to this virus, if not old age.

I just got the news that my grandpa has been safely transferred to a short-term rehab facility and I am relieved. He is doing better but my mom still can't visit him. I'm hoping to be able to call but he has a really hard time hearing anything over the phone. I don't want him to feel like we've abandoned him there, but with the virus it makes everything so much more difficult.