

May 8, 2020

Dear Mr. Morris,

My name is Colleen Silva. In nonpandemic times, I practice as a Cardiology nurse practitioner. I have been a nurse for 16 years. I have worked in an ER, at Mass General, in urgent care settings, and now in an outpatient cardiology office. I have "been around the block" in the nursing world and now welcome my 9-5 job in a clinic. Unfortunately in March, I was furloughed from this position. However, I felt very much like I needed to help. I was uncomfortable being an unemployed nurse during a pandemic and reading story after story of sick patients and overworked colleagues. I was offered several temporary positions both at the DCU center field hospital and the Boston Hope Field Hospital. Meanwhile, my mother Loretta, an HR rep at Bane at John Scott House, had stories of the increasing number of sick residents and positive staff. I asked my mother if I could help and started as a temporary nurse at John Scott the week of April 20th. Through my short tenure at JSH, I read disparaging things in a certain local newspaper and heard unkind things about nursing homes in the news. Yesterday (May 7th) was my last day at John Scott and I feel compelled to set the record straight.

As above, I have been in nursing a long time. I have worked with hundreds of different nurses at several different facilities. I can say, without one single doubt in my mind, that I have never worked alongside harder-working, more dedicated nurses than those you have at John Scott. This does not apply just to the nursing staff, it applies to everyone at JSH who labored through this pandemic thus far. They all persevered through intense stress, fear, sadness, and grief while sweating under layers of PPE and, more importantly, they persevered with grace. They made excellent judgement calls based on years of experience and first-hand knowledge and provided absolute flawless care to very sick patients with countless comorbidities. As some residents continued to decline, they knew when it was time to start comfort care or when to call EMS. These residents had become close friends to your employees and when some lost their lives to this horrendous virus, the nurses and ancillary staff ensured the sick knew they were loved and cared for. Once a resident passed and the family notified, your employees dusted off their scrubs and comforted the Covid + roommate. Hugged them, wiped their tears, reassured them, and tried to provide comforting words through two masks and a face shield. There was no time for the staff to grieve their friends. They needed to care for the countless other sick individuals in their charge. No other healthcare facility has the nurse to Covid + patient ratio than nursing homes. It is back-breaking, mentally straining, incredible work and I had the privilege of witnessing these amazing people excel at their jobs under extreme circumstances. Thursday was my last day at John Scott as almost all of the remaining patients have pulled through and are being lifted off of precautions. On Thursday, some of the doors opened and some patients were brought outside for the first time in weeks to take a deep breath. Your nurses and staff did that. They pulled these residents, who they love like family, back from the depths of an unprecedented killer. These residents were weakened but not beaten. This was done on the backs of your truly remarkable employees. The medical world, unfortunately, may never acknowledge what is being done in nursing homes around the country and what was done at John Scott House during this pandemic. They may end up the forgotten heroes by many. However, I wanted you to know that I had an unforgettable experience there. These people truly work harder than any other healthcare staff I have witnessed in my 16 years and I wanted to make sure that you knew that. I thank each and every one of them for showing me the truly altruistic and selfless spirit of my profession. I want them to be recognized as the heroes they all are to their core. Thank you to John Scott House. I will never forget you and am honored to have worked alongside you.

Thank you for your time,

Colleen Silva, NP