



## Saskatoon: May 31-01

Interviewee: It was March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Go figure, it was a Friday. The last day that our residents, including my mother, got to go out on an outing. The last time my sibling got to go out with my mother on that outing to a restaurant. At first the talk around the town was: "Give it two weeks, that's all! It'll be over."

Two weeks came and left. My mother was always so social. Loved to have people around, always had food to serve company and ear to listen, and just loved life, loved to be doing something, or just be with family and friends. But that all changed. Family could no longer come into the care facility that she lived in, in Saskatchewan.

The fortunate part was that I worked in this care facility, so she could see at least one of her children on a daily basis. But this was not the case for so many other residents. It was hard not only as a family member, but as a staff member, to see and witness what was happening around the facility. There was anger, pain, frustration, so much loneliness, boredom, feelings of helplessness. Everything that our facility worked so hard against.

My mother started not to eat very well, started not wanting to take her medications. I believe she was lonely. And also, part of her heart was broken as the year before she lost her husband. And now her children, and friends, and family could no longer come to see her. I did my best coming in early to work, staying late to visit with her, and encouraging her to eat. I would get my siblings on the phone with her. But nothing replaces the feel of the human touch. My mother always had one of my siblings there, every day, especially in the evenings when special events were happening at the care facility. And I tell you there was always something happening that she would go to. She was very busy. But again, that all changed, and the halls became quiet.

My mother started to fail and was now deemed palliative. It all happened so fast. It was the beginning of April; she was allowed one family member at a time to come see her. They had to pass the screening at the front door, had to wear all the protective PPE, and of course had to go straight to my mother's room. No interactions with others.

She left us on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. She did not die from COV... from the COVID virus directly. She was in her 80s. But lots was taken away from her in a short period of time. Maybe her heart couldn't handle it any longer. Looking back, I am grateful that she went so quickly. So she didn't have to go through the rest of the pandemic, with all the struggles and frustrations, the fear and anger that was present. Present in that care facility where I'm now just a staff member, no longer a family member.

# COVID<sup>IN THE</sup> HOUSE OF OLD



Was this pandemic hard for me as a staff and family member? Yes, it was. Lots of anger, frustration. But part of me hopes that we have also learned from it.