

CAROL ANN POIRIER,
6520 rue Monkland, app 1,
Montréal, QC H4B 1H4
psycap@hotmail.com

Montreal, August 1st 2017.

Re : Sophia Hester-Diamond (Waskaganish)
Dob: [REDACTED] 1943

To whom it may concern

I became aware of Sophia's presence in Montreal, when I met one of her daughters about a month ago. Since then I have visited her at the Grace Dart Hospital in the east of Montreal. She has been there since February 2017 waiting for a bed somewhere for physiotherapy following the amputation of her left leg below the knee. She is in a ward that has no services, no activities because it is a transition to a more permanent place. Sophia is incapable of getting up on her own and the staff use a lift to put her in a wheel chair, she is 90% of the time in bed because the lift is not always in her wing and when it is 2 people are needed to operate the transfer.

She also has been without glasses since they were lost at the hospital when she was operated. She was sent out for an eye exam but the place was not adapted to a person in a wheel-chair so she was sent back to the hospital without glasses. And she has not had a shower or bath since her arrival in February because that wing is not equipped with a lift in a bathroom.

Luckily Sophia has children who are in Montreal and visit her when they can but cannot always bring her out of the room. Her outings are only when she goes out for medical appointments.

So after being bedridden for so long, she has lost so much muscle mass that she is unable to do the physiotherapy needed for adapting to a prosthesis. She was recently sent to a rehab center to be measured for an adapted wheel-chair, the technician said the report says that she is not a candidate for physiotherapy for the prosthesis because of her weakness but now would need mild physiotherapy to regain the strength that she had before the operation when she was walking with a walker and after then would be a candidate for physiotherapy for a prosthesis. In her present condition she would not be able to return home. There is no ramp, no lift and it takes two people to move her to a wheel chair even with a lift.

After speaking to four of her children it has been clear that the family has been asking how come their mother has not had even one hour of physiotherapy since the operation?

Why was she not referred to a rehab center for physiotherapy after the operation?

Whose responsibility was it to get her in a rehab center, both Sophia and her children say that doctor Steinmetz the surgeon asked at several visits had she started her physio...

For family and friends and for Sophia it sounds like the Cree Health Board has given up on her and that she is destined to live the rest of her life in a wheel chair and away from her home.

On one of my visits, Sophia was upset and I suspect that she is quite discouraged with this situation.

I know that this hits home for me since we are the same age and I cannot imagine being faced with being away from my home, my family and my friends and in a wheel chair when I know that something could be done.

I worked with Sophia for 10 years at the clinic in Waskaganish, she was not only our interpreter but also the reference for anything to do with culture or family history, she was always ready to help us in any way possible. If someone deserves that we do whatever is possible to give her a better quality of life it is Sophia. She served the Cree Health Board for 25 years now it is time that we did everything possible to give her the necessary help so she can pass the next years in a comfortable way. I would understand if she was in her 90's but she is still sound of mind and can face the difficulties of getting back into shape to face the following step i.e. adapting to walking with a prosthesis.

As I am not sure who this letter should go to I am sending it to all parties involved.

Carol Ann Poirier, ex-psychologist in Waskaganish (1994-2004)

Cc: Helen Shecapio-Blacksmith, interim director Montreal Cree Patients,
Ashley Darbouze nurse for Waskaganish, Montreal Cree Patients,
Denise Crozier, sw Montreal Cree Patients,
Dr Harvey, Waskaganish Clinic,
Susan Esau, Cree Health Board Representative Waskaganish Band Office,
Bert Blackned, director Waskaganish Clinic,
Bella Petawabano, Chairwoman, Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay,
Stella Diamond-Mark, daughter.