

EAGLE TIMES

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Family is grateful for available care

To the Editor:

At a time when the U.S. health care system is in serious trouble, the citizens of the State of New Hampshire and more specifically Sullivan County have access to some remarkable resources in the treatment of mental illness and in the care of its senior citizens.

During the last years of her life in Claremont, Ellen Campbell Davis was the direct beneficiary of the considerable skills and compassionate care of the professional staff at West

Central Behavioral Health, New Hampshire Hospital and Sullivan County Health made life a struggle for my mother, but the guidance, concern and careful intervention of counselors at West Central, the enlightened medical treatment at New Hampshire Hospital and the extraordinarily high quality of care at Sullivan County Health Care blessed her final years with a good measure of peace, safety and even some joy.

Our family is extremely grateful to all these fine counselors, doctors, nurses and other caregivers as well as to the many neighbors, friends and others in Claremont who "loved their neighbor as themselves" and took the time to help my mother who, as a nurse, had helped so many people during her career.

As a child, I witnessed the "Sullivan County Farm" up close and heard some of the dark history of the Concord State Mental Hospital. My mother was head nurse for a time at Sullivan County and had done part of her training in Concord right before World War II.

Her stories of the 'conditions' in both places were heart-breaking and at times horrifying. The transformation of the mental health system in NH is nothing short of miraculous. It stands as a shining example of what a state with modes means can accomplish when people of good will, intelligence and compassion tackle a challenge. In a society where mental illness is

still stigmatized and receives second class attention from health insurers, NH is a leader in providing the kind of treatment that the mentally ill need and deserve.

I hope everyone in Claremont and Sullivan County understands their good fortune to have such a fine mental health system. And the City of Claremont can take enormous pride in the presence of West Central Behavioral Health, providing hope and counseling for those who struggle with mental and emotional problems and Sullivan County Health Care, setting the highest standards of care for our elderly citizens who can no longer care for themselves.

Ted Davis and Family
New Rochelle, N.Y