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Coronavirus: Care home owner 'threatened' to take untested elderly

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The care home owner - who asked not to be named - said he was under pressure in March and April to accept elderly patients from hospitals across NI.

At the time, hospital patients did not have to be tested before transfer.

The advice from regulator the Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) was that "there was no expectation" patients would be tested for Covid-19 when moving from hospitals to care homes.

But the care home owner said he was not prepared to risk the health of his staff and residents.

"We have a lot of dual occupancy rooms and I wasn't going to place a resident's life in danger by putting an untested patient in the same room, how could I be expected to do that?" he said.

"By and large, the majority of hospitals we work with were happy with that and only sent us patients who had been tested and received a negative result."

But he said one hospital manager was unwilling to accept their policy.

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"They insisted that we take in a patient who hadn't been tested. They dealt first with my staff but then I had to step in as they weren't backing down.

"They told me that if i didn't take the patient that they would make it known to social workers that we were not open for business.

"It was a clear threat in my mind, but it didn't work.

"I refused to take the patient - the home was Covid-free at the time and I wasn't going to put the health of my staff and residents at risk."



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member that if at any point they were threatened or felt threatened to take a patient or a resident into their home from a hospital they should let us know.

"If these are legitimate concerns that people have, I'll investigate them as part of my role, part of my responsibility as Minister of Health."

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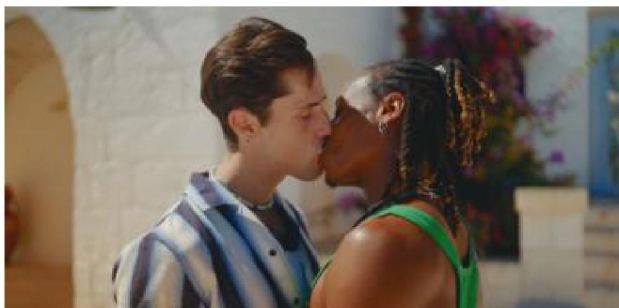
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