Fact Pattern on Tom Slaver-Nursing Home

Brief background:

* The Arc of Tompkins Guardianship program had three out of five people for whom The Arc New York was appointed as Primary Guardian living in nursing homes. These individuals were unable to be placed in skilled nursing facilities in Tompkins County because of the lack of availability and ability to support each of the people for an appropriate placement. (They were subsequently admitted to facilities in Genesee, Brooklyn and then Queens, and Ulster Counties). Two out of three people needed vent care and all three had complex medical  and co-existing conditions and needs that required repeated hospital admissions and long-term care that only a select few nursing homes in NYS were able to offer. All three individuals passed away with the third person in Queens, NY , dying with stage 4 decubitus and other serious medical issues.
* The struggles in locating and placing these individuals in appropriate nursing homes has been very difficult, and the final results and end-of-life have been agonizing for the Arc Chapter Guardianship Committee members and staff for different reasons. The most recent one involves a gentleman Tom Slaver, who was admitted to a rehab center connected to a nursing home in Kingston, NY (Ulster County) who was too far for the chapter’s staff and committee to visit. The Arc New York Guardianship Staff asked the Ulster-Greene-Putnam Arc Chapter to help visit Tom, and they did go at least once. Poor communication is one of many major issues with all of these facilities. Short story: The Arc of Tompkins Chapter’s Guardianship Staff were trying to contact Tom though the nursing home and hospital staff for consecutive days, especially on his birthday. Finally, they were able to speak with a hospital employee and learned that Tom was in the hospital, and died on July 13, 2023, without anyone notifying the guardian for at least 15 days.
* The two Arc Chapter’s Guardianship Staff tried to contact employees at both the nursing home and hospital earlier on to monitor Tom’s care and well being. The staff were not successful in developing a relationship with nursing or social work staff and staying in touch with any one person who could help provide meaningful updates.
* After the staff learned that Tom had died in the hospital, they asked the hospital employee where Tom’s body could be found in order to provide a dignified funeral. Shockingly, they did not know the location of Tom’s remains. After searching, the staff found Tom in the mortuary in Kingston and had him transferred to Tompkins County funeral home for proper funeral and burial services.
* **Issues and Concerns**
* Develop a channel of communication with facilities wherever the person being supported is placed.
* Require frequent onsite and facetime visitations by family/guardians
* Need to identify1-2 contacts including nursing and social workers responsible for communicating with family/guardians about person residing in Nursing Home and Rehab Center
* Contact LTC Ombudsman for additional support and oversight
* Identify the top administrators of all facilities and contact information
* Hold people accountable for providing appropriate support and services!