



LAISSEZ-VOUS TENTER – 04/10/2020 – 09am



YVES CALVI

Thank you very much for being with us this morning on RTL, you are the General Manager of the KORIAN Group, an EHPAD network which has 300 establishments in France, 240 in Germany, 150 in Benelux and 80 in Italy. The EHPADs have become, or at least we perceive them as being the dark spot of the coronavirus contamination in our country. What exactly is the situation in your establishments as we speak?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

First of all, thank you very much for inviting me to speak this morning; if you want figures, I can tell you that among the 23 000 people who live in one of our retirement homes in France, we count to date, since 1 March, 356 people who have died either because they had the coronavirus or because they are thought to have had it. Each one of these deaths is a tragedy — an individual tragedy, a tragedy for their loved ones of course, a tragedy for the teams, for the carers who accompanied them and who often had the impression that they left very quickly, even brutally without these carers having been able to carry out their mission, their vocation as carers to the end. These are really extremely difficult situations. What I want to tell you is that throughout Europe over the last two months, the epidemic began in Italy, then in Spain, and now it is very strong in France and is progressing towards the north of Europe. Well, we, the men and women of KORIAN, are fighting tirelessly to stop the virus, to accompany the people who are contaminated when the virus has entered the establishments and also to take care of, and accompany the anguish of the families as best we can. And this is indeed a situation, a challenge, that is absolutely unprecedented for all of us, for the whole community!

YVES CALVI

Sophie BOISSARD, if you don't mind, you have just given us a picture, a general picture. Let's go over the chapter headings again. As you know, one of the great anxieties for the families at the moment, which is a criticism which appears regularly, concerns the delays or the misses. What can you say to all the families who have a relative in an EHPAD and who are worried? And especially do you confirm to us that, for the moment, the contact is absolutely impossible between the families and the residents? You have told us, of course, that there are about 23,000 of them in our country today.

SOPHIE BOISSARD

No, in our country, there are 700,000 people who live in a retirement home, and the decision taken by the health authorities to protect them because they are elderly and vulnerable was to limit visits to the strictest, to prohibit them from now on in order to protect them from contagion. And this obviously creates enormous anguish both for the people themselves who no longer see their loved ones or who have contact with them by Skype or by means that are not equivalent to physical contact and it also creates enormous guilt or anguish for the families who cannot be as close as possible to their loved ones and who are afraid that they will leave without them.

YVES CALVI

But can your staff inform the families about what's going on, because in fact it seems that somehow, you see the EHPADs have closed down and there's a rupture that's totally, well, terrible?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

What I can tell you, what happens in our facilities is that first of all, obviously, everyone is informed of the health situation of their loved one. There is always a designated family contact for each person living in an EHPAD and additionally, at any time, the person can be called, the establishments can be called, so families can get news and visits are organised, in particular, for end of life accompaniment whenever it is possible. So yes, contact is possible, it is difficult when you are ... for the few homes that have experienced major epidemic situations because you can imagine, when you have an epidemic that breaks out, as has happened in some institutions, you have many, many people who are affected, who need care, you have some of the staff, sometimes up to half of them, who are themselves ill and who must be replaced in a hurry, and you obviously have a very strong demand from each of the relatives to be kept informed of what is happening on a daily basis. And so it is difficult.

YVES CALVI

In this time of crisis, do you recognize that mistakes have been made in some way, wrongs, and would you like to speak clearly this morning to the families who are listening to us?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

What I can say in particular when I think, for example, of the question of the house in Mougins near Cannes, or Thise in the Doubs, which were among the very first to be affected by the epidemic — we were really at the very beginning of March when the virus visibly penetrated the home -- is that very clearly, the violence of the epidemic was such that the information and contacts were perhaps not what they should have been on a daily basis. But what is very important is that today we have learned from these tragic situations and that we now have a quality of dialogue and in any case an extremely strong commitment which is made by each of our teams which is : if a case of infection is found in the house, we say so. And we keep each designated family contact, I insist, well not all the family members, it's impossible, but each designated family contact precisely informed about the health situation of his or her relative and the decisions that need to be taken concerning him or her.

YVES CALVI

So what you have just said is very important because what certainly a large part of the general public has not realised up to now is that a specific family contact is always designated when a person enters an EPHAD and that obviously, the whole family is not going to be called to explain what is happening. It is the family contact's job to do so, which will also make it possible not to block your phone lines or, in any case, communications with these designated family contacts. Do you have today, as we speak, any problems with equipment like many of the health professions? Can we have the latest news? This is also very important for your staff and of course for those who are cared for in the EHPADs.

SOPHIE BOISSARD

Thank you very much for your question; we have been fighting day and night for 2 months to get the necessary equipment. As I speak to you now, we have 10 days of stock available at all times

for each of our homes, obviously in terms of masks, in terms of gloves, in terms of gowns, in terms of hygienic head caps. We also have, thanks to the support of our suppliers, all the oxygen therapy equipment we need, which is very important, but it is a battle. I can tell you today, I said 10 buyers who work day and night to secure these supplies and there are about 30 people who have volunteered within the company to go and supply all the sites, to make sure that we always have this stock for the 10 days ahead of us. It is a struggle because we must remind ourselves that no one, no one, no one across Europe was ready for the pandemic that hit us and everyone jumped on the stock and the equipment at the same moment. It was the same for medicines and that is why we had to set up in a few days, in a few weeks, a real war machine to manage these purchases, these supplies and these logistics, and you know that in some cases there were also thefts, including from logistic sites. So it's really a constant battle even to make sure our stock is safe, but we're getting there!

YVES CALVI

Have you had any deaths or workers on your staff who have been affected by the virus?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

As I speak to you now, we mourn the death of a care assistant in Mulhouse; it was a woman. Elisabeth had 3 children and I would like to say today how much I think of her husband, her children, her colleagues and the whole community at the "La Filature" facility in Mulhouse. Yes, yes, we have staff who are contaminated and I would like to pay tribute this morning to the courage of these carers in nursing homes who every day are there with their residents, with their patients who are struggling, who carry on in spite of whatever happens and whatever the criticisms, who carry on their shoulders the anguish of the families and the collective bad conscience that we all have towards our elderly people. And I believe that François HOLLANDE recently paid tribute to nursing home staff, for which I thank him. I truly believe that what we all need today is this sacred union around our caregivers and around those who have chosen to devote themselves to accompanying the frailest and oldest.

YVES CALVI

I recall that François HOLLANDE's father died recently in a nursing home. One very last question and I would like a quick answer please...excuse me for rushing you but are you now going to do the screening tests among your staff?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

We will conduct screening tests on all of our residents and staff. For that, we need tests and I am delighted that Olivier VERAN announced last week ...

YVES CALVI

Do you have them?

SOPHIE BOISSARD

These tests are in the hands of the health authorities, there are not enough at the moment but they are increasing in number; each time it's possible, we ask for them and we carry them out. This was the case in Mougins and it is being done step by step throughout the network. It is very, very important, it is the key to the fight, it is the key to protection. Thank you.

YVES CALVI

Thank you very much, Sophie BOISSARD, for speaking on RTL and live this morning; I would like to remind everyone that you are Managing Director of the KORIAN Group and that you have

announced this figure of 356 deaths throughout all of your facilities in our country. Good day to you. 09 :14 :00 END*.