Ethics Case #4

You’re being called for a case at Huger Mercy Living Center (our dementia unit). It’s a 48-bed assisted living facility. The patient fell and has been at the facility for over five years. The portable x-ray indicates that the patient has sustained a hip fracture and the patient is experiencing some pain and unable to walk. The family has been notified of the fall and the fracture and they have indicated that they do not want to take their father to the hospital. He never does well in the hospital and he likes the caregivers at Huger. You’ve explained that their father will have to stay in bed because he can’t weight bear and it’s too painful to put him in a wheelchair. You’ve told the family that the surgery would actually improve his quality of life, keep him mobile and he would then avoid complications.

* How would you handle this situation?
* What kind of care could be provided in the assisted living situation?
* Could enough pain medication be given to ease his pain?
* You have a feeling the family is not acting in the best interest of the patient, what should you do? Who could you call for advice?
* What would a successful outcome look like to the family?