

Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Nurses Failure To Assist Patient To Toilet Costs Nursing Home Dearly

Posted at 5:01 AM on July 12, 2010 by Jonathan Rosenfeld

There's been a lot of talk about a recent jury verdict against Hillcrest Nursing Home, a Kentucky facility, after a patient fell while attempting to transfer herself to the toilet-- and there should be, the jury hit the facility with a \$7 million dollar verdict.

The incident involved a patient who was 67-years-young, who was admitted to the nursing home for rehabilitation following a knee surgery. Perhaps due to the woman's youthful appearance, the nurses aide told the woman that she was busy and she could use the toilet herself. It was during the unassisted transfer to the commode, that the nursing home patient fell and severely injured the surgically repaired leg. The leg was so severely injured that it had to be amputated following the fall.

However, as a nursing home lawyer, I am drawn to the common fact pattern that forms the basis of the lawsuit as opposed to the end result. I see many nursing home and hospital patients suffer needless injuries in the bathroom primarily due to two reasons: 1) the staff fails to provide assistance to the patient to get them on to the toilet and 2) the staff leave the patient on the toilet without any supervision.

Of course no one wants to needlessly invade another person's privacy, but when it comes to patients who require assistance, patient safety must trump expectations of privacy.

Jonathan Rosenfeld represents victims of nursing home abuse and neglect throughout the country. For more information please visit Nursing Homes Abuse Blog (www.nursinghomesabuseblog.com), Bed Sore FAQ (www.bedsorefaq.com) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757.

Even when relatively healthy patients can seemingly navigate their way from their bed to the bathroom and place themselves on the toilet, staff must strictly adhere to the doctors orders when it comes to assistance.

Much more so than in other areas of medical facilities, I tend to see patients suffer injuries in the bathroom due to:

- Changes in their blood pressure when getting out of bed or from a wheelchair
- Lack of stability devices within the bathroom-- guardrails, hand grips
- Staff slow to respond to patients requests to use the toilet
- Inadequate staffing levels at facilities to provide the level of patient assistance set forth in a patients care plan
- Staff that ignore physician orders with respect to assistance when it comes to bathroom use

I guess the moral of all this is that while patient privacy certainly has a place, when it comes to using the restroom, don't be shy about asking for assistance--- you just may need it.

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