

Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Abusive Events In Adult Homes Go Unreported & Unprosecuted

Posted by Jonathan Rosenfeld - September 20, 2010

A recent [article](#) in The Seattle Times presented a sad, but realistic, glimpse into the abusive and neglectful conditions found in many adult homes in Washington.

As people look for additional living options instead of traditional nursing homes, adult group homes (characterized as facilities that care for six or few people) theoretically provide an attractive alternative offering more flexibility and a less-expensive alternative to nursing homes.

However, as the Times investigation points out, the adult home facilities are riddled with situations involving apparent abuse and neglect-- that are frequently brushed aside. Times reporters determined that more than 357 adult family homes concealed cases of abuse or neglect of a patient over the past five years in Washington.

Unlike nursing homes and hospitals that are tightly regulated by federal and state regulations, adult homes have traditionally received little-- if any regulation by legislative entities.

Forged medical records, employees lying to state inspectors and owners threatening patients with eviction if they cooperate with authorities, were just a some of the tactics commonly used by adult home operators to conceal abusive events.

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.

The obvious desire to cover-up cases of obviously negligent conduct was highlighted in the case of Suzanne Moore, a 68-year-old adult home patient who sustained catastrophic burns to her face and ears after she was apparently smoking while connected to an oxygen pump. Despite the fact that Ms. Moore was partially blind and physically incapable of lighting a cigarette on her own, all staff at the facility denied any role in the incident when questioned by police investigators.

If not for Mr. Moore's retrieval of his wife's melted wheelchair, damaged oxygen pump and burned clothing, investigators would have been completely at loss for prosecuting that matter criminally.

As a lawyer who has civilly prosecuted cases involving group home abuse and other types of patient mistreatment, I can hardly say that such intentional attempts to cover up problems is unique. However, I believe that when law enforcement officials get involved early on in the primary stages following an incident the chances of discovering what really happened are far greater.

Yet, as this Seattle Times article demonstrates, we certainly need additional regulation of non-traditional living arrangements, such as group homes, in order protect vulnerable people living in facilities never conceived of in the past.

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