



Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Are Tougher Rules Called For At Assisted Living Facilities?

*Posted by **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on April 26, 2011*

Perhaps some of the most some of the biggest drawbacks with assisted living facilities —and other alternative senior housing arrangements came to light recently when six people at a North Carolina assisted living facility died from hepatitis after staff used dirty syringes to administer drugs such as insulin.

Officials from the North Carolina Department of Health have confirmed that unsafe diabetes care practiced by staff at Glen Care of Mount Olive was to blame the patients deaths. It was estimated that needles used to test patients' blood sugar levels were reused by staff at the facility, which resulted in the hepatitis outbreak. Further, none of the staff involved in the incidents had taken any training course related to infection control. Nor, were there any regulations requiring them to do so.

Unlike nursing homes, where laws generally specify who may administer drugs, at assisted living facilities and other types of non-traditional senior living arrangements, few laws address how drugs are to be administered to patients.

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 (www.rosenfeldinjurylawyers.com).

In fact, **assisted living facilities** (and other types of residential care facilities for the elderly) are not permitted to render any type of medical care. Rather, when and if a patient requires medical attention it is the duty of the facility to either relocate the individual or seek outside medical care.

As evidenced by the situation in North Carolina, some assisted living facilities are squirming around regulations restricting medical care, by asserting that the administration of medications to patients is not 'medical care'. Because assisted living facilities aren't medical facilities and thus cannot employ nurses or other formally trained medical staff, some facilities have implemented the use of medication aides.

After obvious lapses in basis sanitation, North Carolina legislators are now introducing legislation that would impose stricter training and higher performance standards for medication aids and others who provide medication to people in assisted living facilities. The bill introduced by Representative Jennifer Weiss would impose requirements such as:

- Competency requirements for adult care medication aides
- Specialized infection control guidelines
- Authorize state human services inspectors to review assisted living facilities on an annual basis or needed to insure the requirements are met
- All new employees of assisted living facilities would be required to take an infection control class beginning in 2013
- The Growth of Assisted Living Facilities Needs to Be Accompanied By Regulation

As the cost of long-term care continues to climb, assisted living facilities, group homes and residential care facilities for the elderly have become increasingly popular as less costly alternatives to nursing homes. While many of these facilities do provide

emotional support and assistance with daily living needs, other facilities need to be reminded of their limits with respect to providing medical care for people.

As we see by the situation at this [North Carolina assisted living facility](#), even relatively basic medical care does require specialized training of staff. Hopefully, the new legislation will take hold to protect these particularly vulnerable people and will draw attention importance of intensified regulation of these living arrangements.

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[Investigation Determines Serious Safety Violations At Sunrise Assisted Living Facilities That Threaten Patient Safety](#)

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[Are seniors in residential care facilities and other alternative living arrangements at risk for developing bedsores?](#)

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