



Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Prison Sentence For Caregiver Who Ignored Patients Bed Sores

By **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on September 14, 2011

Whenever I hear about a “remotely-operated” care home, I automatically become a bit suspicious.

Patients in any nursing home deserve ‘round-the-clock care, so I wonder sometimes how these “facilities” can get away with such bare-bones staffing.

I was reminded of this disturbing reality recently as I read through a horrifying story from Hawaii. According to [The Maui News](#), an 86-year-old patient in an unnamed “community care facility” in Oahu became so neglected that he developed 11 fatal [stage-four bed sores](#). His main caretaker, nurse Ross Rasmussen, says he only checked in on his patient once a month.

“If I had known there was a problem, I would have done something about it,” Rasmussen claimed in a court hearing on August 26.

Distract Attorney Dawn Shigezawa disagreed, deeming Rasmussen’s treatment to be “severe neglect.”

“If Rasmussen basically did the minimal check and looked down [his patient’s] hospital gown, he would have noticed [the bedsores],” she said. “It wouldn’t have taken much. It was a horrible way to die.”

Rasmussen claimed not to have seen any bed sores on his last visit to the patient on Sept. 11, 2007. The patient was found unconscious one month later, on October 12, with pressure sores on his “entire back side from his shoulders to his heels, with gangrene found on one heel,” according to The Maui News. Only three days after being admitted to the hospital, the patient - who couldn’t speak due to a previous stroke - died.

I find it almost impossible to believe that Rasmussen didn’t notice any bed sores, since late-stage bed sores take fairly significant time to develop. And, even if the bed sores did develop immediately after his last visit, Rasmussen should have known better, as an experienced nurse. Obviously patients who are physically immobile are at an extremely high risk for developing pressure sores, and should be turned several times a day.

I can only hope that this case exposes the truth about what proved to be an extremely negligent “care home.”