



Jonathan Rosenfeld's Nursing Homes Abuse Blog

Nursing Home Spotlight: Northwoods Care Center; Belvidere, IL

By **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on August 23, 2011

Three surveys; one very negligent nursing home. At least that's what it looks like after analyzing recent Illinois Health Department data about the **Northwoods Care Centre** in Belvidere, IL.

The surveys, conducted in late 2010, and June 2011, highlight several areas in which the home was consistently negligent. Key among them was the failure to distribute medications on time, failure to keep residents properly fed, and failure to develop proper care plans.

Along with noting disturbing trends at Northwoods, the surveys documented several unacceptable incidents, including:

Physical Abuse and Improper Wound Care on October 17, 2010

A **survey** from November 3rd, 2010, reports a distressing situation in which a patient's hematoma was left untreated, leading to emergency surgery and **anemia**. According to the report, the hematoma was caused by a staff member striking the patient's lower right leg with a towel. The assault caused "bruising to the area, which increased rapidly and then split open and began to bleed."

Surveyors found that staff left the patient's open wound "oozing with blood" for more than four hours, from 2 - 6 p.m. on October 17, 2010. The hematoma rapidly grew from the size of a half-dollar to the length of the patient's calf. Only after the patient's sheets became "saturated with

blood” did nursing staff decide to take action.

When asked in an interview how often she monitored the patient, the primary care nurse replied: “Every 20-40 minutes. Even if we weren’t documenting, at least every hour.” The Director of Nursing claimed that Northwoods had no official policy regarding the assessment of injuries.

The Illinois Department of Health Considered the incident an “F-Tag 309,” or violation of quality of care.

Head Injury on November 24, 2010 Due to a Dangerous Headboard

A **December 2010** survey carefully noted an incident where a resident sustained a serious head injury as a result of contact with a dangerous headboard. According to the survey, the patient cut her head on an “ornate object with notable sharp edges” on November 24, 2010. The laceration was 1/4-inch deep with a “moderate amount of bleeding.”

As of December 6, 2010 - when the survey was completed - nurses still had yet to move the patient to a safer bed.

Northwoods, according to the Medicare data, has twice as many “health care deficiencies” (19) as the average nursing home in Illinois, which typically has eight. Its percentage of patients with **pressure sores** (28) is also more than twice the Illinois average of 13 percent.

The health department surveys noted that Northwoods has paid more than \$16,000 in civil fees over the past year. An **additional financial report** says Northwoods presently owes \$8,000 for a “Type A” violation “in the area of nursing.”

If you have a family member at Northwoods Care Centre who you believe is suffering from mistreatment, we would honor the opportunity to speak with you. As always, our consultations are free of charge and completely confidential.