

## Nursing Home Abuse: A Growing Epidemic

Unfortunately, one does not need to read the papers or watch the news every day to be aware of the problem of nursing home abuse. Many people are becoming aware of what has been going on for decades, but was seldom reported in the past. One of the reasons so much silence has surrounded the problem of nursing home abuse was that patients and their families were unaware of the rights of nursing home patients, and rarely complained because they were concerned they wouldn't be believed or that their concerns would not be addressed. Much nursing home abuse occurred behind closed doors, and the elderly victims were threatened not to say anything to their loved ones. In some cases, elders can't physically report mistreatment.

However, more people are aware of the problem of nursing home abuse, and watch for signs and symptoms of such problems. Long-term care facilities are also dealing with these problems, not least because they fear prosecution and lawsuits. Many perform background checks on prospective employees and screen their staff carefully because they do not want to take any chances. Others write out contracts and ensure the patients and their families understand their rights. The desire for such facilities to protect themselves has led to more effective care.

However, even though many facilities are taking action to prevent nursing home elder abuse, there are still many problems that arise. One of the issues is that the elderly tend to have less power than others, and are vulnerable to exploitation. Underpaid and unsatisfied staff can sometimes take out their stress on patients in various ways or neglect them altogether as a form of protest against their employers. The result is that the patients suffer, and it is vital to see if abuse is taking place and to take action.

Some forms of nursing home abuse are obvious. If strange bruises appear on the patient, it may be true that the injury was due to a fall, but you may have reason to suspect the cause was intentional. If you are bringing a case of nursing home abuse, you will need to prove these injuries were inflicted by staff and were the result of the nursing home. With sexual abuse, the victim may be too ashamed to speak of the abuse, but he or she should be examined by a doctor immediately for signs of abuse. A facility can be sued for breach of contract if the patient's basic needs are not met. Some forms of abuse are easier to prove than others, but none of the signs should be ignored.

If you suspect nursing home abuse, you should contact the lawyers at Jack Bernstein & Associates who are skilled in this area and are knowledgeable on how to deal with nursing home abuse. You will need to decide whether you want an investigation, a civil case or to bring criminal charges against a facility. You will need to be able to prove

the abuse and hopefully have witnesses to back you up. Proving nursing home abuse in many cases is not easy, but it is necessary to try before others suffer the same fate. Bringing a nursing home abuse case will not only protect your loved one, but will improve conditions for countless others. Contact our experienced nursing home abuse lawyers today to get help with your case.