



YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

J. Erick Santana, Esq.

SIGNS THAT YOUR LOVED ONE IS BEING NEGLECTED AT A NURSING HOME

With a large elderly population in South Florida, there are many Nursing Home facilities available for persons that need help with the basic necessities of life, such as bathing, dressing and eating. These facilities are available for people that cannot take care of themselves and are in need of extra medical care.

Usually, an elderly person's spouse or children has to make the difficult decision of placing someone in a Nursing Home. Upon entering someone in the Nursing Home, one places a lot of trust in their medical staff due to the vulnerability of the sick or elderly family member. However, in some situations, the elderly are not taken care of as they should be and are either mistreated or abandoned.

There are certain signs that one can look for in a person to point to the possibility of negligence or abuse in a Nursing Home. First, is the energy level; if the elderly person seems weaker than normal, it could be that the facility is not providing them with the proper nutrients and/or not helping them consume the food. The Nursing Home Facility may be merely leaving the food tray beside the elderly individual and not taking the extra step in helping them eat. Also, it could be that the Nursing Home is not properly giving the patient their medications.

Another indication of neglect is unexplained bruises on the person's body. Depending on the person, some may require help getting out of bed. However, if the facility's staff does not come to the patient's side when summoned and the loved one is in need of using a restroom, on some occasions the elderly person will try to get up, fall, and get hurt.

Also, if the elderly person can not walk on their own, bed rails should be extended on their bed so they do not accidentally fall and get hurt. Upon entering the facility, the Nursing Home should assess the fall risk of the elderly individual and take proper precautions to reduce the chance of injury. If they fail to take these precautions, they may be held negligent for the injuries sustained by the loved one.

An additional indication of neglect is bed sores on the elderly person. If the person can not move on their own power, a Nursing Home has the responsibility of moving them occasionally throughout the day so that the person does not



develop bed sores or what is called decubitus ulcers. These ulcers most commonly occur in the buttocks area and the heels of the feet, if the person is left facing up, motionless, and not moved on a regular basis.

Also, along with moving the patient, the bed dressing should be changed often and the facility should be kept clean and sanitized so as to not cause further injury in the form of bacteria and disease to a potentially susceptible and feeble elderly patient.

If you believe that your loved one is being mistreated or neglected, you should consult a personal injury attorney who will help you investigate the Nursing Home Facility and help you obtain monetary compensation for the negligence of the Home. There are also government agencies that should be contacted in the case of abuse or neglect: the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-962-2873 and the Agency for Health Care Administration at 1-888-419-3456.

*For additional information please contact CECERE & SANTANA | Toll free: (866) 913-3948
Tel: (954) 653-9969 | Fax: (954) 653-9979*