

Less Money, More Abuse- Elderly Negligence in Texas

Texas faces a nursing home funding crisis that has been going on for years but only threatens to get worse. The state currently rates 49th in the nation in Medicaid funding, which pays for about two-thirds of Texas nursing home residents, or 60,000 people. The state is fourth in the nation in aggregate underfunding for residents. A recent analysis of the Medicaid program noted that the funding outlook for Texas nursing homes in 2010 and 2011 is “bleak.” Dallas nursing home abuse lawyers note that incidents of nursing home abuse and nursing home neglect continue to rise.

More Facts and Figures

1. The funding crisis affects nursing home care in many ways. Here are some facts about the state of Texas nursing homes:
2. Medicare ratings for 2008 show that 28 percent of Texas nursing homes received the worst rating possible.
3. Ten percent of Texans pay for their long-term care with private funds or long-term care insurance.
4. The other 90 percent are either long-term care residents paid for by Medicaid or short-term rehabilitation patients paid for by Medicare.
5. The turnover rate among certified nurses’ aides (CNAs) in Texas nursing homes is 87 percent a year.
6. Sixty nursing homes have closed in Texas since 2006.

What Do These Numbers Mean for My Family Member?

In Texas, 60 percent of a nursing home’s costs pay for staffing. As funds continue to dry up, well-qualified caregivers become harder and harder to hold onto. Some nursing homes are no longer able to have a registered nurse onsite at all times, a situation that increases patients’ visits to the emergency room. The high turnover in staff means that staff members, especially lower-level staff like CNAs, typically have little experience. Furthermore, they don’t have time to build relationships with the residents, to learn to care about their individual needs or to recognize them as human beings rather than just patients. According to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, the number one complaint filed in nursing homes is neglect at the hands of nursing home staff.

Facilities also suffer when funding is scarce. A deficiency discovered in inspections every year finds that sanitation is a major problem. Food preparation and bath areas may not be clean in your loved one’s home. The food itself also suffers in quality. Buildings and equipment cannot be updated and fall into disrepair, which at the very least impairs quality of life and, at worst, may present a danger to residents. In such cases one the residents or their family members should not delay in [reporting elder abuse](#). By proper reporting of such lapses, it will be possible to seek elder abuse help.

Whether your family member pays for long-term care with Medicaid or another source of funds, the facility itself is almost certain to be affected by the funding crisis. Until the state and federal governments can solve this problem, you have to be especially vigilant. Visit your family member often, listen and watch while you are there, and report any problems you see to the authorities. If you feel that the rights of your loved one have been violated through neglect or abuse, contact our [Dallas nursing home abuse lawyers](#) immediately.