

## Common Dangers and Threats in Ohio Nursing Homes

Written by Australian Business

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CINCINNATI, OH, September 30, 2013 /24-7PressRelease/ -- Ohio is a place where family is of utmost importance, so the care of a disabled or elderly loved one is a great concern. That's why it may be surprising to learn that many southern Ohio nursing homes fall well below acceptable standards in areas such as health inspections, staffing and quality measures. Sadly, this problem involves more than just sanitary shortcomings and understaffing.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, 1 in 10 elders are abused in this country and only 1 in 24 instances are ever examined by the authorities. Elder mistreatment is a pervasive problem throughout the Midwest and nation.

When nursing homes fail to ensure that residents are provided with an acceptable standard of care, they become dangerous places where patients' health may quickly decline, rather than improve or remain stable. Poorly run facilities can become breeding grounds for life-threatening diseases and places where patient neglect goes unnoticed or ignored.

This article will explore common threats to nursing home residents and the warning signs that something is wrong. Lastly, it will discuss what legal rights families have when a loved one has been harmed by [nursing home abuse or neglect](#).

### Health Care-Associated Infections

In July, an Ohio nursing home became a site of national concern when an outbreak of Legionnaire's disease infected 39 people, killing six. The Wesley Ridge Retirement Community in Reynoldsburg became a haven for the deadly Legionella bacteria, infecting residents, visitors and staff with the vicious form of pneumonia. Officials tied the spread of Legionnaire's disease to the facility's air conditioning system.

Legionnaire's disease, or Legionellosis, is one of several health care-associated infections (HAIs) that are commonly found in nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

Clostridium difficile, or C. diff, is a nasty bacteria species that causes diarrhea. C. diff is resistant to antibiotics, so an infected person can become fatally ill if he or she doesn't have a strong immune system. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), C. difficile kills 14,000 Americans every year.

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Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) causes a menacing staph infection. MRSA is frequently spread in nursing homes when staff members fail to properly wash their hands or sterilize equipment shared among patients. Basic hygiene practices can prevent MRSA, but when a facility has an outbreak, it can be hard to contain.

### Patient Neglect And Abuse

Sadly, many nursing home residents are harmed at the hands of the caregivers who are supposed to preserve their health and happiness. Understaffing and negligent staff lead to the mistreatment of thousands of Ohio nursing home residents each year.

Autumn Health Care Nursing Home in Zanesville was recently shut down after a lengthy pattern of horrific care. The Ohio Attorney General's office had warned the facility that its license was in peril, but that didn't stop the home from hiring people who neglected patients and stole their personal belongings. Hidden cameras documented the appalling behavior by staff members and led Ohio officials to take such an extreme action.

Unfortunately, Autumn Health Care's appalling conduct isn't an isolated incident. A variety of unacceptable behaviors are common throughout Ohio nursing homes. These detestable acts include:

- Patient neglect- Patient abuse, both physical and psychological- Medication errors- Lack of supervision/security, especially with patients suffering from dementia

After reprehensible conduct, nursing home staff often tries to shield residents from contact with family members. If a staff member prevents a patient from speaking with family in privacy, it could be a warning sign. Other [signs of abuse](#) and neglect include bedsores and bruises.

If you believe that a loved one has been harmed by nursing home abuse or neglect, you may have legal recourse against the wrongdoers.

### **Nursing Home Lawsuits**

When a family has proof that a nursing home's negligence has caused a loved one's serious injury or wrongful death, it can file a lawsuit against the at-fault parties. A lawsuit can draw attention to the unacceptable conduct and exact civil justice, while allowing the family to recover monetary compensation. A suit may also prompt an investigation by regulators and possibly prevent the harming of other nursing home residents.

Proof of abuse or neglect comes in many forms. It may consist of audio or video recordings, photographs or testimony from the victim, family members or doctors. An experienced Ohio nursing home abuse attorney can help with the collection, documentation and preservation of evidence, so families should contact a lawyer when they first suspect mistreatment.

### **About Rittgers & Rittgers, Attorneys At Law**

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