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Arlington, MA 02474  
February 17, 2010

MA Dept. of Public Health  
Division of Health Care Quality  
99 Chauncy Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02111

Re: care at three health care facilities

To Whom It May Concern:

This complaint encompasses three facilities to date, and I was directed by the Ombudsman covering “Golden Living” to address this complaint to the MA Dept. of Public Health.

On 12/16/09 my mother was transported to Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), 55 Fruit Street, Boston, MA due to difficulty breathing and some fluid on her lungs. During the ER stay, prior to her being sent to the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, a catheter was inserted, and she contracted a urinary tract infection (UTI) to a resistant strain of E. coli.

It took hours for my mother to be sent to a floor because we were told that MGH was having “staffing problems.” When my mother finally obtained a bed, it was on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor in a small, cluttered, dingy room. She was seen primarily by clinicians in training, and the care seemed less than optimal. My mother was placed on an antibiotic for three days and then the antibiotic was discontinued. This was the wrong antibiotic for this resistant strain of E. coli. My mother presented with no fever and no elevated white cell count; however this is common in the elderly; one much look for confusion, change in speech pattern, lethargy, etc. Apparently these clinicians in training missed all of these indicators.

Then my mother was transferred to Youville/Spaulding, 1575 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA on 12/24/09 apparently without having the UTI resolved. While at Youville/Spaulding, my mother was on at least three different antibiotics; an IV antibiotic was given from approximately 1/4/10 to 1/12/10. Again, apparently this antibiotic was not appropriate for the type of infection and the UTI presented again. So when my mother was transferred on 1/29/10 to Golden Living Center Heathwood, Chestnut Hill, MA, she had a UTI.

Youville/Spaulding (owned by “Partners” that owns MGH) is having financial difficulties which manifest in less than sufficient staff (aides not available to give showers/clean patients/change beds), aides and nurses yelling at each other, a nurse standing in the hallway ranting about a patient and stating that he did not care what happened to him, housekeeping lax in “community” areas (e.g., visitor bathrooms, patient/family lounge, hallway of main entrance (latex glove on floor), garbage in visitor parking areas – water bottles, coffee cups, beer cans, etc.), etc. I often gave my mother showers and changed her bed.

For all of the problems at Youville/Spaulding, my mother for the most part had reasonable care except for the lack of appropriate antibiotic to treat her UTI and little attention apparently paid to an 18 pound weight loss.

At Golden Living Center, however, virtually no attention was paid to poor nutrition and hydration. My mother apparently lost 8 pounds in 5 days. It was an effort to get “ensure” supplement; I believe 6 cans were provided in 12 days. The wrong antibiotic was given for the UTI and the infection became intense

with partial kidney failure. We are told by clinicians at Newton-Wellesley Hospital that there are only 4 antibiotics that are effective against this resistant strain of E.coli.

My mother was ashen and nearly going in and out of syncope; however, none of the nurses or doctor keyed in on the problem and the signs of confusion, slurred speech, lethargy, etc. The PT techs were forcing my mother to engage in “exercise” when my mother was barely able to stay awake and stand up. Also, these individuals seemed to fail to pay adequate attention to her other medical problems – one nurse indicated that fluid in my mother’s extremities was normal.

To add insult to injury, Golden Living Center sent my mother to MGH on 2/9/10 for a medical appointment and neither Golden Living Center personnel nor Cataldo ambulance staff had the presence of mind to secure the wheelchair before the ambulance departed. It appears from what little we have been told that the wheelchair flew backwards with my mother. My mother was not evaluated for any injury at MGH – this should have happened.

Furthermore, at Golden Living, my mother was often incontinent and “aides” did not clean her. This behavior exacerbated the UTI infection problem which became worse. On 2/8/10 I arrived at 0700 hrs to find the window open to air out the room, the bedding soaked, and my mother’s clothing wet with urine and fecal matter in her underwear. It appears that she had been left in this state for hours. She was so cold that she could not speak and it took 4 hours to warm her.

This problem happened again on 2/9/10; the 11 pm-7 am nurse scolded the aide for not doing her job and the nurse changed the bedding. I gave my mother a shower as I did for most of the 12 days that my mother was forced to spend at Golden Living Center.

The same problem was evident on 2/10 and 2/11/10. There were also the issues of not adhering to a “cardiac” diet, and some sort of bugs dried into the blankets.

Thus, even though this facility is “rated” well by the state of Massachusetts, it is apparently lacking when it comes to the care of patients with UTIs, CHF, mitral valve problems, restricted diets, etc.

My mother has been subjected to a UTI for 2 months, placed on wrong antibiotics, bounced from facility to facility without apparent resolution of the UTI, and forced to stay in a “nursing home” with less than adequate ability to address her medical issues apparently because it is more convenient for a so called “guardian.”

No one should be subjected to this type of “care.”

Sharyn Eklund