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State fines Claremont after man falls, dies

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May 31, 2007

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The Claremont Rehab and Living Center in Buffalo Grove was hit with a \$20,000 fine from the Illinois Department of Public Health last week for an incident that, according to the state agency, resulted in the death of a patient.

According to a Department of Public Health report, an unidentified patient with amputated legs below the knee was in a physical therapy room at the center on Jan 10, 2005, and attempted to get off a therapy mat and walk to a nearby wheelchair. The patient fell in the attempt, causing a brain injury and death, according to the report.

The report identifies the patient as a 78-year-old man, but does not indicate his name.

The report includes excerpts of interviews with unnamed staff members. Those staff members included the physical therapist, who stated she had completed stretching exercises with the patient, and left him on the therapy table. As she was standing in the doorway of the therapy room, the patient must have attempted to get to the wheelchair, the report states. The report states the therapist estimates she left the patient alone for about five minutes.

She also related the wheelchair was about 15 or 20 feet away from the therapy table, according to the report.

The Department of Public Health investigation led the department to believe the facility had failed to supervise the patient, who was at high risk for falls, during the physical therapy session. That failure resulted in the fall and subsequent death, the report states.

The report states the investigation was one of three made by the department for falls at the facility that led to emergency room or hospital visits.

The fine was issued for the most serious of violations of the Nursing Home Care Act imposed by the state, according to a press release issued by the Department of Public Health.

Amy Ferrari, Claremont spokeswoman, said the incident occurred while the facility was under previous management, and she did not have further comment on the incident or the fine. She said management at the facility changed in March 2005.

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