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Family sues Hinsdale nursing home over woman's death

ManorCare in Hinsdale accused of negligence, overmedicating 74-year-old

By Bridget Doyle, TribLocal reporter

8:30 PM CDT, September 2, 2010

Family members are suing a Hinsdale nursing home, saying negligence and overmedicating caused the death of a 74-year-old woman less than a month after she arrived at the facility.

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, the family of Dolores Howorth claims the Western Springs resident died of kidney failure caused by dehydration because ManorCare Health Services chemically restrained her.

The suit claims she was given medication that wasn't necessary to treat her dementia and was physically restrained with a wheelchair lap restraint.

The family seeks damages in excess of \$50,000 on each of the seven counts in the lawsuit.

ManorCare representative Kelly Kessler said Thursday that the company would not respond until it received and reviewed the suit.

Howorth was admitted to ManorCare's Arcadia dementia unit on March 20, 2009, the suit stated. Within 48 hours, she was prescribed Ativan, a sedative. Four days later she was prescribed Seroquel, an anti-psychotic. The lawsuit stated that Howorth lost 16.1 pounds in her first 12 days at ManorCare.

Howorth was rushed from ManorCare to Adventist Hinsdale Hospital April 15, 2009, and was pronounced dead a few hours after admission. The Illinois Department of Public Health investigated and cited ManorCare for improper care, neglect and improper restraint of Howorth, according to documents provided by the law firm representing the family.

Howorth's son, Hank, said that shortly into his mother's stay, she was exhausted all hours of the day and was sometimes unresponsive.

"I visited her every single day, and she would always be sleeping — often unrousable," he said.

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