

MICHAEL LERNER:

No GEM for Quality Senior Care

Michael Lerner's GEM Healthcare operates the Galesburg Terrace Nursing Home and three others—Camelot Terrace in Streator, Forest Hill Health & Rehab in East Moline and Regal Health & Rehab in Oak Lawn.

Here's what state inspectors and residents have to say about the quality of care in Lerner's GEM facilities:

"(The hallways)...reeked of urine"

—State of Illinois Health Inspector

"It hurts like hell"

—Resident, in response to Health Inspector questions regarding open untreated pressure sores

"(She) was observed to have her eyes tightly closed and had facial grimacing. (She) begged staff, 'Please don't touch me.'"

—State of Illinois Health Inspector's observation of resident's untreated inward rotation of leg

"I told (the administrator) that we needed more staff to monitor and that I did not feel safe but (the administrator) just cut my hours down"

—Nurse at Gem Healthcare facility

 **SEIU Healthcare**
United for Quality Care

Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H.
Director, Illinois Department of Public Health
535 W. Jefferson Street
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Dr. Arnold,

Based in Chicago, Gem Healthcare manages four Illinois nursing homes with troubled patient care records, Forest Hill Health and Rehab in East Moline, Galesburg Terrace in Galesburg, Regal Health and Rehab in Oak Lawn and Camelot Terrace in Streator. Over the last several years, facilities managed by Gem Healthcare have accumulated numerous care violations. These violations have resulted in widespread negative health outcomes for nursing home residents and created a public health emergency.

While under the management of Gem Healthcare and its President Michael Lerner, residents of these homes have suffered sexual abuse, debilitating health issues and even death, all while the company continues to collect millions in public Medicaid dollars for this care. While Michael Lerner's Gem Healthcare and related companies receive public dollars from these facilities, frontline caregivers at these homes receive poverty level wages.

The State of Illinois has a responsibility and an obligation to protect the residents dependent on these nursing homes. With more than 280 Illinois residents currently placed in Gem Healthcare's four facilities, the state needs to take immediate action to protect these elderly residents from the "care" provided by Michael Lerner and Gem Healthcare.

In 2007 and 2008, the Illinois Department of Public Health recorded 77 violations of patient care and fire safety reported at Gem facilities. Over 88% of these violations were for cases where potential or actual harm existed for the residents living there.

An analysis of state of Illinois's patient care data for 2007 and 2008 reveal the following unfathomable conditions at Gem Healthcare facilities:

- During an inspection a Gem facility, state surveyors reported, hallways "reeked of urine"
- Failed to keep residents clean and groomed
- Failed to provide treatment for pressure sores
- Failed to identify and evaluate the sexual behaviors of residents with impaired cognition levels for understanding of these behaviors.
- Failure to call 911 in a timely manner
- Failure to have a plan for emergency services
- Failure to adequately staff and monitor a confused resident resulted in resident's death
- Failure to adequately staff and monitor a confused resident resulted in resident's death

A complete report documenting the patient care violations at Gem Healthcare facilities can be accessed at www.lernernogem.com.

Under the Nursing Home Care Act, the Illinois Department of Public Health has the ability and responsibility to appoint a receiver to control a nursing home when "...a threat to the health, safety or welfare of a resident (exists) that the facility is unwilling or unable to correct". With years of violations in care documented at the nursing homes "managed" by Michael Lerner, we assert that Illinois citizens in Gem Healthcare's care face this threat now.

Because of the continued and widespread violations of care experienced by residents of Gem Healthcare's facilities, we recommend the following:

The immediate appointment by the Illinois Department of a receiver to assume control of these facilities until the responsibility of serving our elderly can be placed with a company that families of Illinois can trust.

Sincerely,

Because of the continued and widespread violations of care experienced by residents of Gem Healthcare's facilities, we recommend the following:

The immediate appointment by the Illinois Department of a receiver to assume control of these facilities until the responsibility of serving our elderly can be placed with a company that families of Illinois can trust.

SEIU Healthcare Illinois—the state's largest healthcare union—is calling on Illinois nursing home regulators to protect quality senior care by investigating Michael Lerner and GEM Healthcare's record.

If you have a loved one who is currently a patient at Galesburg Terrace or to join the campaign for quality senior care, please call

800-321-SEIU, ext. 7037.

www.lernernogem.com



SEIU Healthcare
United for Quality Care