



# Spotlight On Justice



## LAWSUITS = BETTER NURSING HOME CARE

The courts are critical for guaranteeing quality care in nursing homes.

- A 78-year-old woman, admitted to a nursing home for short-term hip and wrist rehabilitation, died after suffering severe pressure sores, malnourishment and dehydration. As part of the settlement, the company changed its patient monitoring and care procedures in each of its 65 nursing homes.<sup>1</sup>
- A 63-year-old Alzheimer patient was strangled to death by the restraints in her bed rails while sleeping. As part of the settlement, the nursing home agreed to numerous operational reforms.<sup>2</sup>
- A 79-year-old nursing home patient suffering from Alzheimer's disease drowned in a bathtub after being left unattended. As a result of this lawsuit, the nursing home installed safety strips in bathtubs and exercised closer supervision of its elderly patients.<sup>3</sup>



Sources:

<sup>1</sup> *Olson v. Chisolm Trail Living & Rehabilitation Center*, No. 98-0363 (Caldwell County Ct., Tex., verdict August 26, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> *Trew v. Smith & Davis Mfg. Co.*, No. SF 95-354 (Santa Fe County Jud. Dist. Ct., N.M., verdict July 19, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> *Beale v. Beechnut Manor Living*, No. 90-18826 (Harris County Dist. Ct., Tex., verdict May 21, 1992). See, Center for Justice & Democracy, *Lifesavers: CJ&D's Guide to Lawsuits that Protect Us All* (2002).

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