



February 23, 2009

To whom it may concern,

I was the primary care giver of Mrs. Eva Karem when she passed away in February 2008. She had originally been admitted to ~~Jefferson Place~~ approximately a year earlier as a Do Not Resuscitate, and this order was restated by a verbal order 48 hours prior to her demise. However, once she was found unresponsive, EMS was called and resuscitation was instituted. This involved chest compressions, intubation, and transfer to Suburban Hospital emergency room with further work up before she was finally pronounced dead. It is my hope that this unfortunate incident can lead to changes which will prevent further unnecessary disrespect, trauma, and cost at the time of a loved one's death.

Sincerely,

  
John U. Varga, MD

\* Jefferson Manor, not Jefferson Place. sv/kuz





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## Nursing homes cited in 6 deaths

By Valarie Honeycutt Spears - [vhoneycutt@herald-leader.com](mailto:vhoneycutt@herald-leader.com)

Since 2007, four nursing homes in Kentucky have been cited by state investigators for failing to perform lifesaving measures on residents who had requested that they be resuscitated.

In addition, two nursing homes have been cited for ignoring written orders that residents not be resuscitated, according to documents obtained under the state open records law.

The errors alleged by the state provide ammunition for those who are pushing for a new law or regulation that would mean all nursing homes would use a purple wristband to identify residents who had signed a do not resuscitate — or DNR — order, said Bernie Vonderheide, president of Kentuckians for Nursing Home Reform.

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"A voluntary system won't work," Vonderheide said, "because some nursing homes will do it and some will not, leaving the resident as the loser."  
 Tim Veno, president and CEO of the Kentucky Association of Homes and Services for the Aging — a group that represents long-term care providers — has said he doesn't think a law is necessary if nursing homes follow best practices.  
 Kentucky has no uniform regulations regarding how to inform staff members of DNR orders at the bedside at nursing homes

or hospitals.

Three different groups of nursing home and hospital officials are meeting in the next several weeks to determine whether Kentucky should join other states that have adopted a color-coded system.

Five of the six facilities sanctioned received Type A citations, the most serious the state can give. In all six cases, the individuals died.

- Kenton Healthcare in Lexington was cited in September 2007 after the staff allegedly did not initiate lifesaving measures on a resident despite a doctor's orders that everything possible be done to save the patient.

Bill Gray, a spokesman for Prestige Healthcare, the company that manages Kenton, declined to comment.

- Hillcrest Health Care Center in Owensboro was cited in December 2008 after cardiovascular pulmonary resuscitation was not performed on a resident who wanted to be resuscitated.

- In April 2007, staff members at Christian Health Center in Bowling Green did not immediately resuscitate a resident, despite a doctor's orders that lifesaving measures should be used.

Staff members told state investigators that the facility did not have a system that allowed immediate access to the code status of a resident.

Hillcrest and Christian Health officials did not return telephone calls asking for a response.

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5/7/2009

## Nursing homes cited in 6 deaths - Lat...

- Woodland Oaks Nursing Home in Ashland is appealing a citation it received in January. Officials there deny failing to perform CPR on a dying patient who had requested lifesaving measures.
- On the other end of the spectrum, Green Meadows Health Care in Mount Washington received a citation in March 2008 for trying to revive a resident who had signed a DNR order. Green Meadows officials did not return a telephone call seeking comment.
- In March, Jefferson Manor in Louisville was cited after 95-year-old Eva Karem was resuscitated in February 2008 despite a DNR order. (It received a citation that was not as serious as a Type A.)

The Karem case prompted a series of meetings of lawmakers, nursing home officials and others who are looking at the use of wristbands.

Jefferson Manor officials have declined to comment.

Meanwhile, if the Kentucky Hospital Association board decides in June to recommend the purple wristband, hospitals would not be required to comply. There have been no reports of errors at Kentucky hospitals, said Elizabeth Cobb, a spokeswoman for the association.

The hospital association is also considering using a red wristband to indicate allergies and a yellow wristband to indicate that a patient has a risk of falling.

A group at UK HealthCare also is studying the use of color-coded arm bands, spokeswoman Amanda Nelson said. UK uses several overlapping methods to ensure DNR status is evident, said Nelson.

The UK study group will give careful consideration to any recommendations the Kentucky Hospital Association makes, Nelson said.

"It is very important to accurately identify patients' preferences regarding resuscitation, while also protecting their privacy, which is a factor we will be taking into careful consideration when making our decision," she said.

Reach Valarie Honeycutt Spears at (859) 231-3409 or 1-800-950-6397, Ext. 3409

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**punkn** wrote on 05/07/2009 11:47:22 AM:

Excellent... comment...sunnyjoerin..I totally agree.

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**sunnyjoerin** wrote on 05/07/2009 08:16:30 AM:

I agree that people should have their wishes honored (and here it comes) BUT what makes these so called do gooders think that nursing home residents should be tagged like cattle? They assume that NH residents are unaware of what is going on around them and/or don't care that they have a rainbow of wristbands on their arm. They also demonstrate their ignorance of how fragile the skin of many elderly are. That they react to plastic with an allergy type reaction with itching and rashes and that the edges of such branding can cause cuts or skin tears opening these folks up to all kind of other skin problems and infection. Unfortunately, in the US we, generally, have a lack of respect for the elderly, especially those who can no longer speak for themselves so this is another example of the "who cares about what they think or feel?" mentality.

So, we tag them like livestock. What's next euthanasia?

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# Resuscitation orders not always followed in Ky.

March 22, 2009 @ 10:01 PM  
2009/The Herald-Dispatch  
Herald-Dispatch.com

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP) — The question of whether to resuscitate a dying patient is supposed to be resolved by checking the patient's orders.

But the Lexington Herald-Leader reported Sunday that a gap in Kentucky law has led to errors at the bedside of the dying.

Sadiqa Reynolds, inspector general for the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said there is no uniform regulation for denoting a patient's wishes regarding resuscitation in a long-term care facility or a hospital.

That leads to problems such as an incident at Woodland Oaks Healthcare Center in Ashland on Christmas Eve. A state citation alleges that the center failed to perform CPR on a dying resident, even though the resident had signed an order asking for resuscitation.

Or the opposite problem, which occurred in February 2008, when John Karem arrived at Jefferson Manor Nursing Home in Louisville to find an emergency medical technician performing CPR on his 95-year-old mother, Eva.

John Karem said this was done even though the nursing home had do-not-resuscitate or DNR orders on file.

"What we saw on the night of our mother's death was a large man pounding on her chest," said Karem.

"Was she somehow aware that this was not going the way she wanted?" he asked. "The questions keep coming. ... But the pain, agony, frustration and anger just linger."

Pat Mulloy, president of Louisville-based Senior Care Inc. which owns Jefferson Manor, declined to comment.

Karem said he has filed a complaint with Reynolds' office in his mother's case and met last week with Reynolds and state Rep. Bob DeWeese, R-Louisville, to try to come up with a better way to alert caregivers to a person's wishes and prevent errors.

“We will continue to talk with provider groups, advocates, families, legislators and surveyors to ensure that whatever action is taken is well thought out and clear, because we all have the same goal of respecting residents’ wishes,” Reynolds said.

Federal and state laws require that hospitals and nursing homes keep do-not-resuscitate orders in a patient’s chart. But when it comes to how those orders are carried out at the bedside, it is up to the facility. Some use color-coded wrist bands, colored tape on residents’ doors or stickers on their charts.

In Ashland, the resident’s death led to the state issuing Woodland Oaks the most serious citation a nursing home can get.

The nursing home is appealing the citation, according to Cheryl Harrison, an attorney for Woodland Oaks.

Bernie Vonderheide, president of Kentuckians for Nursing Home Reform, who attended the meeting last week with Karem and Reynolds, said that any solution should be mandated through the General Assembly so that it will be followed uniformly.

Tim Veno, president and CEO of the Kentucky Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, a group that represents long-term care providers, was also at the meeting and is asking that a panel of professionals come up with recommendations of best practices.

The Kentucky Hospital Association recently surveyed hospitals about their methods and next month is putting together a team that will decide on voluntary uniform procedures, possibly including a colored wrist band, according to spokeswoman Elizabeth Cobb.

One group in Kentucky that does have a uniform policy is emergency medical service technicians, who require a signed order in hand or a DNR bracelet before they agree not to resuscitate.