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## Brookfield nursing home deficiencies corrected, state says

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The staff at the Woodland Health Care Center in Brookfield has corrected the deficiencies that left residents without proper pain medication and other care, a state official said Thursday.

Inspectors with the state Bureau of Quality Assurance, which monitors nursing home care, reviewed the treatment at Woodland earlier this week in a follow-up to an inspection in March and April that revealed nine federal deficiencies and four state violations.

The nine federal deficiencies, double the average for nursing homes statewide, represented instances of substandard care that threatened the dignity, rights and comfort of the nursing home residents.

The problems included unanswered call lights, a lack of timely toileting assistance and a failure to pursue changes in pain medication despite repeated complaints over a two-month period.

The nursing home owner, Five Star Quality Care of Wisconsin LLC, still faces fines for the earlier violations, and the dollar amounts are being reviewed, said Pat Benish, regional field operations director for the Bureau of Quality Assurance.


Steve Johnson, a regional director of operations for Five Star, said administrators at the home had been working to correct the problems, and the findings of the follow-up inspection were expected.

"The appropriate management staff is in place, and that has taken care of the problem, and it will continue to be in compliance," Johnson said.

Complaints about care in the 200-bed nursing home are continuing, however, according to Joan Schmitz, who monitors Woodland for the Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care.

Schmitz said she had received a number of complaints from relatives of current and former Woodland patients since the care deficiencies were reported.

### Background

 [5/11/04](#): Nursing home cited for inadequate care

"Seeing the article opened a Pandora's box for some of these people," Schmitz said.

But older complaints cannot be investigated under federal rules, and Schmitz encouraged people to contact the state ombudsman's office with complaints as quickly as possible, by calling (800) 815-0015.

Schmitz said she had doubts that the problems causing unacceptable levels of care could be solved "overnight," and said that the state inspectors assess only the care being delivered at a particular moment.

Jay Urban, a Milwaukee attorney, said the problems identified in the earlier survey seem similar to the lack of care he alleges caused the death of Helen Nissenbaum in October 2001.

Urban represents Nissenbaum's survivors in a wrongful death suit against Five Star.

According to the suit, Nissenbaum, 77, went to Woodland on Oct. 24, 2001, after being treated for a heart problem at Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital. Her condition deteriorated while at Woodland, and she died of an infection on Oct. 29, the suit states.

Urban said the nurses and other staff at Woodland failed to provide adequate care and follow standard required procedures.

Those failures allowed the infection to go undetected and untreated, leading to Nissenbaum's death, he said.

Woodland has denied responsibility for Nissenbaum's death in its answer to the lawsuit, which is pending in Waukesha County Circuit Court.

Johnson said he could not comment on the pending litigation.

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