



State Senator

Norma Champion

Room 221— State Capitol
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Contact: Reggie McElhannon

Phone: (573) 751-2583

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STATEMENT TO MEDIA

by State Senator Norma Champion – 30th District

“Yesterday (5/10), I received notification by the Department of Health and Senior Services of horrific conditions at a skilled nursing facility in west Springfield which apparently led to the physical and verbal abuse of residents, increased exposure to illness and injury by the residents, and in some cases, death.

Upon further inquiry of the Department, I became aware that this information was obtained during a routine inspection by inspectors with the Department. These state employees are to be commended for their actions.

In addition, I became aware that on Wednesday of this week (5/9), a second inspection revealed that not only had conditions at the facility not been corrected, they had continued. I understand that the Department began proceedings to revoke this facility’s eligibility to receive Medicaid and Medicare payments.

Last evening, upon receiving the above information, I notified the Department of my grave concern for the immediate well-being of the residents at this facility. I was contacted within a short time by the Department that procedures would be initiated today in regard to the facility’s license to operate. I am pleased by their swift response to this request.

While my interests on this issue are obvious due to my serving as the senator for the 30th District, I am further concerned due to my service as Chair of the Senate Committee on Seniors, Families, and Public Health.

As chair of the committee which handles most legislation relating to seniors, I made a request earlier today to Governor Blunt requesting that he have the Department of Health and Social Services review its policies and procedures as to its contingency and communication plans upon discovery of conditions found not only in facilities such as the one in west Springfield, but in all types of residential facilities which the Department licenses.

I am most interested in knowing what procedures are in place to determine whether a situation has reached a level requiring immediate state intervention, what actions should be taken to ensure the protection of the residents, and upon that determination what process is in place to disseminate this information to the next of kin, the media, the general public, and the General Assembly.

I welcome any recommendations from the Governor and the Department in regard to statutory changes that would expedite intervention and public notification, and most importantly any measures that would better protect our state’s seniors.”

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