

State decertifies Hills nursing home

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which occurs when the federal government will no longer pay Medicaid or Medicare because of substandard care.

"Once our federal monies are cut off... we have to decide whether to keep patients where they are. The state can keep patients in those homes and pay the Medicaid. Or we have the option now to move patients to certified homes with federal monies and provide better care for the patients," Weiner said.

Williamsburg officials also have been notified that they are in the process of losing state certification for basic care services.

"But they have a window of opportunity in which to make the necessary corrections," Verlan said.

An administrative hearing is being scheduled during which Williamsburg officials can document improvements. Nursing home officials can request state health officials to return to the home and again survey care services, Verlan said.

DESPITE THE decertification, Williamsburg is not yet at the end of the line.

Williamsburg officials can "posture themselves and make a case" to regain their certification for skilled care. The nursing home would have to make improvements and state officials would resurvey the home. Yet

another survey would be conducted within 30 days to ensure continued compliance, Verlan said.

Using state law to temporarily remove patients is significant because it is the first time the Bureau of Health Facilities has had leverage in improving patient care, Weiner said.

"In the past, we have not had any place to move them (nursing home patients). Now, for the first time, we have leverage," Weiner said. "We can keep patients in the neighborhood. And it's happening with the cooperation of the industry because the good nursing homes are joining the state in bringing up the care in nursing homes."

This round of annual nursing home evaluations differed significantly from past reviews in that health officials spent an average two days in the homes under review. Previous evaluations were generally conducted in the nursing home administration's office where health officials reviewed files and other administrative items, Weiner said.

"The shift here is on the patient level of care. There is strict criteria for rating," she said.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Williamsburg Convalescent Center is on the west side of Middlebelt, north of Eight Mile.

Driver is sought

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of Bloomfield Hills, who was unavailable for comment, filed an appeal after Lippitt, who took over the case, sentenced Doa last September.

Lippitt ruled that Doa must serve the jail sentence, regardless of the psychological examination — showing she was too fragile to go to jail — and Doa's argument that she had a previous agreement with Breighner.

Lippitt, however, agreed to let Doa remain free, pending the outcome of her appeal. Doa appealed Lippitt's decision not to reassess the case to Breighner.

Lambert's mother, Sharalyn of West Bloomfield Township, has been actively involved in the case from

the beginning and had demanded a jail sentence for Doa.

LAMBERT SAID she spent all of Monday in Lippitt's court, waiting for police to locate Doa and bring her to court for sentencing.

Though Lambert returned to court Tuesday, Doa still could not be located, Lambert said.

Despite the delay, Lambert said she is confident justice will be served.

"The criminal justice system has worked so far — she was convicted, sentenced, the (state) Court of Appeals upheld completion of the sentence," Lambert said. "But you have no control over what people do. Eventually, she has to appear somewhere."

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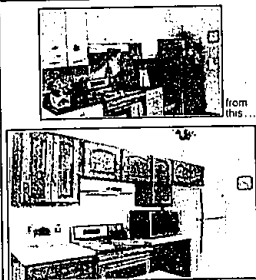
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