

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Carole Herman: 916-481-8558

## **California Nursing Homes Illegally Understaffed**

**Elderly, Disabled at Risk, Watchdog Group Sues to Enforce Minimum Standards**

SACRAMENTO, CA – Hundreds of California nursing homes are endangering the lives of the elderly populations in their care by failing to staff their facilities at the minimum levels required by state law, according to lawsuits filed recently in Northern California. According to The Foundation Aiding the Elderly, (FATE) the widespread practice of providing insufficient skilled nursing staff is the underlying cause of most of the preventable health problems experienced by nursing home residents. FATE is the plaintiff in the suits, which seek injunctions forcing large chain operators of nursing homes to hire enough nursing staff to comply with the law and provide adequate levels of care to their patients.

“It is well-documented that inadequate staffing leads to inadequate care,” says Carole Herman, president of FATE. “Nursing home residents are among the most fragile and vulnerable members of our society. Understaffing exposes them to significantly increased risk of serious health complications ranging from poor hygiene and incontinence to pressure sores, infection, dehydration, malnutrition, and serious accidents.”

“Understaffing of skilled nursing facilities is a deplorable practice, as well as a clear violation of state law,” according to lawyer Mark Todzo. Todzo, of The Lexington Law Group, a San Francisco public interest law firm, is lead counsel for FATE. “The nursing home industry has been unwilling to police itself in this regard,” Todzo said. “It is unfortunate that it takes the intervention of the courts to bring the operators into compliance with such a basic requirement as minimum staffing.”

FATE was founded in 1982 with the mission of assuring that elders are treated with care, dignity and the utmost respect during their final years when they can no longer care for themselves. FATE provides information, counseling, advice, resources and referrals to those who need assistance in dealing with care of the elderly.

Defendants are owners and operators of large nursing home chains statewide. They include Covenant Care California, Inc., Kindred Healthcare, Inc., Mariner Health Care, Inc., and Pleasant Care Corporation.

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