

Richard Whitley, M.S.
Administrator

Tracey D. Green, M.D.
State Health Officer



Contact Name: Martha Framsted, PIO
Phone Number: 775.684.4014
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Page 1 of 1

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION

NEWS RELEASE

ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY INDUSTRY PLEDGES TO WORK ON PROBLEMS

Carson City-In response to problems identified at Chancellor Gardens of the Lakes, more than 70 representatives of large assisted living facilities in Nevada attended an emergency meeting on Wednesday. The meeting, called by the State Health Division, resulted in pledges by the industry to support regulatory changes that would affect medication technicians. Medication technicians receive initial training to learn how to successfully administer medications in a residential care setting.

Marla McDade Williams, Chief of the Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance, called the meeting on the heels of yet another large assisted living facility being identified as having significant medication management issues. Fines can reach more than \$100,000 as facilities strive to get their medication programs under control. In some cases, as with that of Chancellor Gardens, failure to rectify the problems can lead to a facility's license being revoked. "I am encouraged by the outpouring of support to find solutions to these problems," said Williams.

Proposed changes to the regulations concerning medication technicians will be discussed in January at a meeting of the Assisted Living Advisory Council, which was formed by the State Board of Health to work with this industry. Some proposals under discussion will be establishing ratios for medication technicians to residents, making changes to the required training schedule for medication technicians, and considering methods to revoke a technician's certificate when significant problems are identified with a person's ability to safely administer medications to the state's elderly and disabled residents.

Margaret McConnell, an active administrator of her own facility and chair of the Board of Examiners for Long Term Care Administrators, noted the medication administration program was established with the cooperation of the physician and pharmacy community. It is imperative that problems get fixed to continue to allow the medication administration programs to be successful in residential care settings.

The Nevada State Health Division's Bureau of Health Care Quality and Compliance protects the safety and welfare of the public through the promotion and advocacy of quality health care through licensing, regulation, enforcement and education. This mission is accomplished through the Bureau's two sections: Licensure and Certification, which regulates facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes, hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers and laboratories; and Radiological Health, which evaluates and responds to hazards from sources of ionizing radiation such as X-ray machines, sources of radiation to treat cancer and mammography units. For health facilities, more than 900 surveys are conducted each year of Nevada's licensees. More information about the Bureau may be found at: <http://health.nv.gov/hcqc.htm>.

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Richard Whitley, Administrator

4150 Technology Way, Suite 300 Carson City, Nevada 89706
Phone (775) 684-4200, Fax (775) 684-4211
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