

Community Health Ministry

“When Is a Group Home Not a Group Home?”



-As told by a Julia Means RN from Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee

Josephine is a fifty-five year old woman who comes to see me regularly for blood pressure checks at the Clinton Rose Senior Center. She told me that she lived in a group home since she had not fully recovered from a previous stroke.

One Monday, she came to see me at Clinton Rose because she felt dizzy and faint. When I took her blood pressure, I found it was extremely elevated at 180/120. I called her “group home” for further information. The staff there said, “Oh, she gets that all the time, just send her home on the van and she will be all right.” I wasn’t comfortable with that and took her to a hospital emergency room. There, she received immediate help and her blood pressure came down significantly. When I explored things further with the group home, I found that she had run out of medication five days ago. I also found that, in fact, the “group home” was not a licensed group home but an arrangement where she would be “looked in on” periodically. They did not supervise her medications, but left the medication management to Josephine alone.

When I informed Josephine’s daughter about all of these things, she was very concerned. She made arrangements to meet with Josephine and her physician and also started looking into other living arrangements. By Wednesday, Josephine was moved into an assisted living arrangement where the staff would actually supervise her medications and help to control her blood pressure and hopefully avoid future strokes. I was happy that Josephine had enough trust in me to have approached me and to have allowed me to serve as her advocate in this time of crisis.

For more information on the Community Health Ministry please visit:
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