

NEW DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE RULES RAISE QUESTIONS

by Di Findley, Executive Director, Iowa CareGivers Association

New rules about dependent adult abuse proposed by the Department of Inspections and Appeals were recently reviewed and adopted by the Iowa Administrative Rules Review Committee. You may be hearing or reading about them, and some things you hear or read may not necessarily be accurate. My request to you is this -- Keep an open mind in forming your opinion!

The Iowa CareGivers Association has been heavily involved in the conversations that led to the rules being written and adopted. Our views were formed after seeking information from department officials, legal counsel, direct care workers, and many others. There was a lot of interest in what you, as direct care workers, would think about the rules and about how you would be treated if the rules were adopted. Based upon conversations we've had with direct care workers, we are pretty certain that you:

- Have no tolerance for anyone abusing the residents/clients you serve
- Want those who abuse residents/clients to be held accountable
- Want to be treated fairly and not charged with abuse when a resident/client is injured when actions you take may be the result of short staffing or other circumstances totally out of your control.

The following statement was provided by Dean Lerner, Director, Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals:

"The Department appreciates the support of and collaboration with the Iowa CareGivers Association during the rulemaking process. DIA strongly supports the role and mission of the Direct Care Workers (DCWs) who, on a daily basis, provide care to the state's elderly and vulnerable residents. These rules will better protect vulnerable Iowans residing in healthcare settings across our state, while assuring that appropriate steps are taken against only those individuals who are founded for abuse.

The Department will make certain that the reputation of Direct Care Workers is not tarnished by those few workers who abuse vulnerable Iowans, and we will remain vigilant in protecting both vulnerable Iowans and the rights of Direct Care Workers to not be founded for abuse without foundation. The totality of the circumstances will always be considered when evaluating responsibility for abuse. Additionally, the Department is committed to providing ongoing training to the state's DCWs on this important subject, and will be announcing training opportunities in the near future.

In the end, we supported the new rules because we believe they provide the best balance between being fair to you and those you serve. Are they perfect? Probably not, but there is no question that they are better. [Click here](#) to read ICA comments submitted to the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, and the Rules Committee.

The main thing we want you to know and remember is this: **There is no way the Iowa CareGivers Association would have supported these rules, or any other rules, if they were not a step forward for you, your profession, and the Iowans you serve every day!** With the new rules, you will be treated more fairly while at the same time not making it virtually impossible for the state to hold an "abuser" accountable.

Thanks for your commitment to quality care in Iowa and for trusting us to share your voice.

Sincerely, Di