



## DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

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### **Disability Rights Center – NH Issues Two Reports, Calls for Action on Abuse and Neglect at Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center**

Concord, NH - Today Disability Rights Center – New Hampshire (DRC) issued two reports concerning abuse and neglect at Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center in Effingham, NH. These reports describe a long-term pattern of poor treatment resulting in abuse and neglect, injuries and, in one case, death. DRC calls for the closure of the facility and action by the state to ensure the safety and well-being of its residents.

The first report, *“Investigation into the Circumstances Leading to the Death of J.D.\*, a Resident of Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center,”* describes the circumstances leading to the death of J.D., a young man who was at Lakeview for only 72 days. In those 72 days, J.D.’s physical and mental health deteriorated rapidly. He lost nearly 50 pounds and was in a metabolic state of starvation. He had been regularly refusing his medications and food. Lakeview minimized these and many other danger signs. In the last hours of his life Lakeview staff allowed him to lie on the floor in his own urine. DRC concluded that Lakeview’s actions and inactions with respect to J.D. constituted neglect and likely led to his untimely death.

“This was the most horrific case of neglect I have ever seen,” said Karen Rosenberg, Lead Investigator in J.D.’s case. “J.D. was miserably sick and depressed during his short time at Lakeview. Despite the precipitous decline in his health, Lakeview failed to recognize his dire circumstances and minimized his symptoms which ultimately led to his death.”

Due to the gravity of its findings regarding J.D.’s death and receipt of additional complaints of abuse and neglect which suggested deep-seated and longstanding deficiencies at Lakeview, DRC undertook a comprehensive review of investigation reports issued by various agencies as well as police logs, public and news reports and other information concerning Lakeview’s operations. DRC compiled the information it reviewed and now issues a second report, *“Isolated, Segregated and Vulnerable – A Report and Call to Action Concerning Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center,”* which documents years of abusive and neglectful practices at Lakeview causing suffering, injury and, in at least one case, death to residents.

\*DRC assigned a pseudonym to protect this individual’s privacy.

DRC's reports describe a lack of professional oversight; inadequate coordination of medical, neurologic and psychiatric care; inadequate staffing levels; lack of training for, and indifference of some direct support staff; and broad failures in communication between and among Lakeview's staff and between Lakeview and its residents' families and guardians.

DRC's Executive Director Richard Cohen, commenting on the reports, stated, "This young man's death and the circumstances around it are tragic. His death could have been prevented had responsible officials heeded the continuous and pervasive warning signals from numerous prior incidents. What is particularly disturbing is that the NH Department of Health and Human Services and Lakeview's administration allows this isolated and substandard facility to operate and continue to admit and then mistreat vulnerable individuals from this and other states."

DRC urges closure of Lakeview and calls upon the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to take swift remedial action to protect Lakeview's residents from further harm. DRC urges DHHS to further develop a range of community based housing and supportive service options to ensure that all individuals, including those with challenging physical, emotional and behavioral needs, are able to remain in their home communities and be fully integrated into community life.

Both reports can be found on DRC's website at [www.drcnh.org/Lakeview.html](http://www.drcnh.org/Lakeview.html)