

## Statement of Nelson Baugh

My name is Nelson Baugh. I am 52 years old and a resident of BJC Nursing Home in Commerce, Georgia. I was in a car accident in November of 1969, resulting in a broken neck and paralysis from the waist down. I was in rehab at the Shepherd's Spinal Clinic in Atlanta, Georgia for six months, then lived with my parents in Jackson County, Georgia until my mother's death in 1985. I moved to Douglas, Georgia to live with my sister and her family, and later moved to a nursing home in Douglas. I was transferred to BJC in my home county of Jackson about 10 years ago. Despite my disability, I am alert and in my right mind. God has given me the ability to paint, which I do regularly. I have sold some of my paintings and participated in various exhibits and art shows. I am able to get around in a motorized wheelchair. I am familiar with many of the residents in the nursing home, most of whom are elderly and cannot speak for themselves, being totally dependent. I advocate on their behalf whenever I can, because when I see them hurting it hurts me too.

In the time I have resided here, I don't believe the nursing home has always done their job in providing quality care for the residents. Although I, along with other residents, have complained to the nursing staff and also to the administrator, and have even contacted the state Office of Regulatory Services (ORS), the problems not only remained but got worse. The problems I'm speaking of include shortage of staff, bad odors, verbal abuse, problems with the food, cleanliness, lack of privacy, and failing to contact the doctor when the circumstances called for it. When the ORS would come for their annual inspection, the nursing home would be ready for them because it was always every 12 months, and always on a week day during business hours. If they did find deficiencies, they would give them time to correct before imposing penalties and once they left, the problems remained.

The survey conducted in July of 1999 was different. It was the most thorough survey that I have ever seen, and more deficiencies were found than ever before. The ORS came in very early on a Sunday morning and saw the situation clearly for the first time. The shortage of staff was very evident and the lack of care to the residents could not be denied. As I understand it, they imposed immediate penalties and have been conducting spot checks periodically, in order to insure the nursing home comes into and stays in compliance. The result has been much improvement in the care of the residents, and has greatly increased their morale.

I think the federal government should stay on the states and the states on the nursing homes. They should come into the facilities with a white glove and leave with that glove white. It should be mandated by the government that the nursing homes keep enough trained staff to adequately care for the residents. This past survey is proof that the increased enforcement and monitoring of the nursing homes DOES result in better care. The nursing homes admit residents and take what funds the resident has each month with the understanding of the resident that he'll get the proper care. Please help do what you can to see that their rights are protected, and they are given the care to which each individual is entitled.

Thank you for given me this opportunity to help to advocate for residents in nursing homes and God bless each of you.