

# LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

*Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice*

## NEW REPORT ILLUSTRATES INHUMANE CONDITIONS IN NURSING HOMES

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**January 21, 2020** – For far too many nursing home residents, adequate care and treatment with dignity are out of reach. Though nursing home standards are strong, the promise of those standards is frequently broken. Last year, a resident’s daughter testified at a [U.S. Senate hearing](#), “[m]y final memories of my mother’s life now include watching her bang uncontrollably on her private parts for days after the rape, with tears rolling down her eyes, apparently trying to tell me what had been done to her but unable to speak due to her disease.” A [federal assessment found](#) that, “[i]n light of the increased number and severity of abuse deficiencies, it is imperative that CMS have strong nursing home oversight in place to protect residents from abuse.”

Sadly, rather than answering these calls to protect elderly residents, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency responsible for protecting residents, has [instead](#) called for **reducing standards, cutting penalties for abuse, and decreasing oversight**. This response led us to ask the question: ***How bad does nursing home care have to get before our state and federal leaders take action?*** We know that, too often, the resident experience falls far short of both the promise that nursing homes make to residents when they enter a facility and the federal requirements for nursing home care. Ultimately, we questioned how the experiences of residents even stack up against the requirements and expectations for the care and treatment of animals.

Today, we are publishing the results of this assessment in a new report, [Animal Care Standards vs. Nursing Home Resident Experiences: An Appraisal of the Extent to which Nursing Home Conditions Fail to Meet the Standards of Care for Animals in Zoos and Other Settings](#). The point of this work is not to trivialize the experiences of either nursing home residents or animals but, rather, to illustrate how systemic failures to hold nursing homes accountable for abuse and neglect too often subject residents to conditions that not only fall below the federal nursing home standards of care, but also below accepted standards for the humane treatment of animals.

Example from report:

- **Animal Care Standard:** An elephant’s skin must be thoroughly inspected on a daily basis and cared for as needed through bathing, removal of dead skin, and treatment of dry skin or other skin problems. The elephant’s skin should be supple and free of dead skin buildup, and not cracked or dry.
- **Nursing Home Standard:** All residents must receive care to ensure that they do not develop pressure ulcers unless the individual’s clinical condition demonstrates that they were unavoidable. A resident with pressure ulcers must receive care, consistent with professional standards, to promote healing, prevent infection, and prevent new ulcers from developing.
- **Actual Nursing Home Resident Experience:** Several residents at a Tennessee nursing home were harmed after the facility failed to prevent and treat their pressure ulcers. One resident, who had not received body audits for 35 days, developed a Stage 4 pressure ulcer on their left buttock.
- **Nursing Home Stats:** Over 93,000 U.S. nursing home residents currently have pressure ulcers.

*The report includes links to free resources that residents and families can use to support their advocacy for care and conditions that meet federal standards. It is available at <https://nursinghome411.org/ltccc-report-animal-care-vs-nursing-home-care>.*