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Department of Public Health cites Alden Des Plaines Rehabilitation & Health Center for lack of supervision after 81-year-old woman falls and dies—family files lawsuit on her behalf

CHICAGO, IL – John J. Perconti and Patricia Gifford of the Chicago-based law firm Levin & Perconti filed a lawsuit this afternoon in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois against Alden Des Plaines Rehabilitation & Health Center (1221 East Golf Road) on behalf of Thomas Spencer, the son of 81-year-year-old Jacquelynn Spencer, a resident who died as a result of a head trauma sustained while under their care. Alden was cited by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) for improper nursing care and resident injury.

Jacquelynn Spencer was admitted to Alden Des Plaines on November 25, 2005 after being hospitalized for a fall that caused a fracture to her left rib. Jacquelynn was released to Alden because she required around-the-clock skilled nursing care, close supervision and assistance with all the activities of daily living. Her family relied on Alden’s promise to provide the highest quality of care and protection for their loved one.

The complaint alleges that when Jacquelynn was readmitted to Alden following a hospitalization in December, Alden staff improperly completed an assessment for her risk of falling. The assessment did not indicate Jacquelynn’s status as a high risk for falling despite the fact that she had a history of prior falls and was being administered psychotropic medications which cause, amongst other things, unsteadiness. Despite her history of falling, no plan of care

was developed or implemented that addressed Jacquelynn's high risk for falls.

Without precautions in place, Jacquelynn fell in her room at Alden on January 9, 2006, which resulted in a head injury. She suffered an acute left temporal intracranial hemorrhage and subdural hematoma, all of which ultimately caused or contributed to her death on January 14, 2006.

John Perconti, who is representing the family, stated: "Alden's staff did not properly assess Jacquelynn for her high risk of falling despite her significant risk factors. Jacquelynn should have been considered a high risk for falls based on her history and because she was on psychotropic medications which can cause unsteadiness."

Perconti added, "In cases in which a resident is at risk for falling, facilities like Alden need to provide close supervision and assistance as well as alarms for their beds and chairs as precautionary measures."

Attorney Patricia Gifford added: "The Spencer family searched for a nursing facility that would provide the highest standard of care for Jacquelynn. Alden failed to meet her need for close supervision and care."

Jacquelynn is survived by four sons.