



## **California Legislators Propose Sweeping Reform to Assisted Living Facilities**

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California state legislators introduced the Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly Reform Act of 2014, a series of bills proposing sweeping changes to the state's laws governing assisted living facilities, on January 13, 2014. If passed, the bills would require, among other items, more frequent inspections, increased penalties for violations of state laws and regulations, increased training and qualification requirements for administrators and staff, and the establishment of an online consumer information system.

The proposals address concerns resulting from last year's faulty closure of Valley Springs Manor, a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE) in Castro Valley, California. More than a dozen elderly residents were allegedly abandoned after the state ordered the facility to be closed. Legislators said that the proposals are a direct result of what occurred at Valley Springs Manor.

The reform package would require the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division ("CCL") to conduct unannounced, comprehensive inspections of all RCFEs at least annually, which is in comparison to the every-five-years inspection model currently in place. CCL would also be required to initiate and complete complaint investigations more quickly, provide complainants with a written notice of findings, and give complainants an opportunity to appeal.

The proposals would also increase CCL's enforcement abilities. In particular, maximum fines would be raised, and CCL would be given the ability to impose a ban on new admissions to RCFEs if serious health or safety violations have not been corrected or if fines have not been paid.

Under the new proposals, CCL would be required to create an online consumer information system, which would feature license, ownership, survey, and complaint information on every licensed RCFE in the state. Components of the consumer information system would be added over a five-year period.

Additionally, the proposals would add provisions increasing the training and qualification requirements for staff members and administrators of RCFEs, including quadrupling the number of training hours required of caregivers (from 10 hours to 40 hours). The reform package would also require RCFEs to obtain and maintain liability insurance as a condition of licensure.

The costs of these proposals have not yet been determined.

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