



## Malpractice Patterns in Long-Term Care Hospitals Under Federal Investigation

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The U.S. Senate Finance Committee is investigating deaths of patients at long-term care hospitals, in follow-up to a report in the [New York Times](#) last month. That report showed that the profit-making chains who run these hospitals, which cater to chronically ill patients, sometimes skimp on staffing and training, and disasters have resulted.

More on the original report in the Times can be found in our blog entry on the subject [here](#).

Patrick A. Malone  
Patrick Malone & Associates, P.C.  
1331 H Street N.W.  
Suite 902  
Washington, DC 20005

[pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com](mailto:pmalone@patrickmalonelaw.com)  
[www.patrickmalonelaw.com](http://www.patrickmalonelaw.com)  
202-742-1500  
202-742-1515 (fax)

These long-term care hospitals occupy a niche between large general hospitals and nursing homes. They do not treat specific kinds of patients but are defined only by the fact that patients tend to stay longer than at a regular acute-care hospital, but less time than at a nursing home. They are typically small, with around 60 beds. Many times they lease space from a regular hospital and will occupy a floor or wing in a larger facility.

The New York Times reports that it has received new information about disturbing events at hospitals run by the Select Medical chain. One example from the Times:

According to a doctor's deposition in a lawsuit, nurses at a Select hospital in Tulsa, Okla., injected a relatively healthy 79-year-old woman with 10 times the amount of insulin she was supposed to receive back in January 2009. They then failed to notify her doctor for at least 90 minutes after they discovered that she had fallen into a coma. The woman, Ruth Tanner, died a month later without fully regaining consciousness, according to medical records and the lawsuit.

Select Medical generally does not comment on pending lawsuits, so out of respect for the legal process and the parties involved, it will not do so in the Tanner case, the company spokeswoman, Ms. Curnane, said.

Dan Graves, an attorney for Ms. Tanner's family, said that family members agonized after the overdose. "Now their grief

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and loss has been multiplied by the knowledge that other families have suffered similar tragedies because of Select's practices."

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