

## RESOURCE:

### Common Injury Warning Signs Guide

This resource provides families and caregivers with key warning signs of injuries that may indicate neglect or abuse in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. If you notice any of these signs, take immediate action to protect your loved one.

#### 1. Falls and Fractures

- ◆ Unexplained bruises, fractures, or head injuries
- ◆ Sudden difficulty walking or standing
- ◆ Reports of frequent falls without proper medical documentation
- ◆ Lack of handrails or mobility assistance

#### 2. Medication Errors and Overmedication

- ◆ Excessive drowsiness or confusion
- ◆ Missed or duplicated medication doses
- ◆ Changes in personality or unexplained lethargy
- ◆ Symptoms of overdose, such as difficulty breathing or loss of consciousness

#### 3. Malnutrition and Dehydration

- ◆ Noticeable weight loss or extreme weakness
- ◆ Dry skin, cracked lips, or sunken eyes
- ◆ Complaints of hunger or thirst despite scheduled meals
- ◆ Increased susceptibility to infections or slow wound healing

#### 4. **Bedsores and Pressure Ulcers**

- ♦ Red, swollen, or blistered areas on the skin
- ♦ Open wounds, especially on the back, hips, or heels
- ♦ Complaints of pain in immobile residents
- ♦ Strong odor or signs of infection in affected areas

#### 5. **Emotional and Behavioral Changes**

- ♦ Sudden withdrawal from social activities
- ♦ Unusual fearfulness or anxiety around certain staff members
- ♦ Reluctance to speak in front of caregivers
- ♦ Signs of depression or increased agitation

#### 6. **Poor Hygiene and Unsafe Living Conditions**

- ♦ Unkempt appearance, dirty clothing, or foul odors
- ♦ Unsanitary living spaces, including soiled bedding
- ♦ Lack of necessary mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.)
- ♦ Unsafe environment with cluttered hallways and poor lighting

### **What to Do If You Notice These Signs**

- ♦ **Document** evidence with photos and written records.
- ♦ **Speak** with nursing home staff and request an explanation.
- ♦ **File a report** with Washington State Adult Protective Services (APS) or the Long-Term Care Ombudsman.
- ♦ **Seek legal advice** if you suspect negligence or abuse.