

Comments by Dr. Joann Schaefer  
BSDC News Conference  
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The Division Public Health's Licensure Unit has been conducting an investigation at the Beatrice State Developmental Center for over a week.

After reviewing the completed investigation, on Friday I told the Governor I would be taking action, upon my authority, to move all of the medically fragile residents from BSDC. While the order was being drafted, I worked with the facility leadership to immediately address my concerns.

It is my medical opinion that BSDC can no longer care for individuals with complex medical needs.

Also on Friday, based on the Licensure Unit's findings, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid issued an Immediate Jeopardy for the inability to provide proper care to a resident.

Let me be clear; I do not believe all residents are in danger. I do believe there is a potential risk of death or serious physical harm to residents who are medically fragile.

Therefore, I have ordered BSDC to immediately contract for additional around the clock nursing support for these individuals.

I have also ordered the immediate removal of residents deemed medically fragile, which is to be completed no later than Friday, February 6 at 5:00 p.m. This is a complex transition and the safety and well-being of residents is paramount as preparations are made for their move.

We have had tremendous response from hospitals, and BSDC will be able to place all medically fragile residents in a safe environment where they will be cared for by medical personnel according to their conditions.

BSDC is already working with residents, parents and guardians, to find appropriate placements as soon as possible for the residents so that their hospitalization will be as short as possible.

I realize it may take some time to find the appropriate services-long term-that have the resources available to care for medically needy residents, but it is my belief they will be safest while under medical care at a hospital prior to their placement in the community or an appropriate facility.

Hospitals were chosen based on their ability to provide the specialized medical care residents require and provide care for any complications that should arise. At this time, the facility is working with Bryan/LGH, St. Elizabeth, Creighton University Medical Center, the University of Nebraska Medical Center and Alegant Health Systems. Should the need arise, we may work with additional hospitals.

I want to emphasize that this action is what I believe to be medically necessary to ensure the safety of the facility's medically fragile residents.

At this moment, BSDC has extra nurses on staff. They have identified transition teams to coordinate transport of these residents, including nurse-to-nurse transfer of care via phone.

I have requested that developmental technicians from BSDC travel with all residents and remain with them for as long as necessary to give them reassurance that they are in a safe place. This may mean staying overnight, which BSDC and the hospitals are prepared to accommodate.

I also want to be clear I'm speaking of a small population within BSDC, not the entire facility. BSDC and Developmental Disability division leaders will continue to work on their compliance with the Department of Justice and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services directives.

We'll be glad to answer your questions.