

MEDICATION PROCEDURE EASIER TO SWALLOW

A local advocacy council responded to a parent complaint concerning an overly restrictive response to "checking medicine" that occurred in a forensic unit for people with mental retardation. While refusing medication is generally a right, pretending to take medications is a serious problem. After working closely with unit and hospital administration, the procedures were changed to reduce the "punishment" associated with the behavior, while more emphasis was placed on nurse observation of the patient taking the medication and clearly advising the patients of their rights to refuse medication along with the consequences for leaving the area without proper medication.

OUNCE OF PREVENTION

A local advocacy council received a report that a 3 year-old child ran into the street at his daycare. The local advocacy council conducted a site visit at the daycare and recommended that a barrier be erected to hamper the children's access to the parking lot, driveway and street. Because of the actions taken by the local advocacy council, the recommended barrier has been installed.

GROUP HOME CLOSED FOR THE SAKE OF VULNERABLE

LAC members investigated ongoing complaints about a problematic group home for developmentally disabled clients. They presented their findings to the program supervisor for the developmental disabled program to DCF and shared their concerns that the licensed group home remained licensed to provide residential care to 24 adult developmentally disabled clients in spite of substandard living conditions. The group home had operated continuously for 22 years. Investigations and monitoring by DCF as well as the local advocacy council has previously been conducted but only resulted in corrective actions and the home remained licensed. After the local advocacy council members presented their findings, DCF and the local health department scheduled an immediate survey visit in May 2001 and the home's license was changed to "conditional". In July 2001, the conditional license was revoked after the operators failed to correct the deficiencies. The group home owners appealed the revocation and a hearing was held. The judge issued a final order upholding DCF's decision to revoke the group home license. In his final order, the judge commended the local advocacy members for a job well done.