

Elopement: Staff Ignored Door Alarm, Resident Fell, Broke Hip.

A lawsuit filed in the Superior Court, Orange County, California on behalf of an eighty-one year-old nursing facility resident resulted in a \$988,000 settlement, reported on condition that the name of the facility be kept confidential.

The resident had been in the facility more than two years. She entered for supervision and personal care for dementia.

The facility did have door alarms. The alarm did sound when the resident walked out the front door. Two staff members on duty did not hear the door alarm.

It came to light that another staff member did hear the door alarm but was too busy talking on the phone to respond.

The resident walked several doors down the street, fell on the sidewalk, broke her hip and bruised her head. She was found after twenty minutes by a neighbor who notified staff at the facility.

The state Department of Social Services issued a citation for neglect. **Gladys v. Confidential, 2008 WL 2736715 (Sup. Ct. Orange Co., California, May 13, 2008).**