

**Motorized Wheelchairs**  
**(e-mailed to Long Term Care Facilities on 01/08/2009)**

The Bureau has become aware of facilities prohibiting the use of motorized wheelchairs in long term care facilities. Please be advised that the refusal to allow residents to use motorized chairs may violate the resident rights provisions of 42 CFR 483.10(l), to retain and use personal possessions to the maximum extent that space and safety permit and 42 CFR 483.25(a) (l) (ii) regarding ambulation and self-sufficiency once in a wheelchair.

Motorized wheelchairs are predominately used by residents with limited use of their arms and /or legs. A motorized wheelchair enhances aging residents', or those with medical conditions that deteriorate over time, opportunities for independent mobility and assistance to achieve their highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. The refusal to admit a resident with a motorized wheelchair or to permit the continued use of a motorized wheelchair needs to include an evaluation of the resident and the use of the chair by professionals. The professionals may include a physician specializing in rehabilitative or orthopedic medicine, and/or physical /occupational therapists that are aware of the resident's needs and capabilities.

The right to retain and use personal possessions assures that the residents' environment is as homelike as possible and that residents retain as much control over their lives as possible. The facility has the right to limit the resident's exercise of this right on grounds of space and health or safety. Space or safety considerations limiting a resident's use of a motorized wheelchair should be clearly documented following a professional evaluation as well as the facility's plan to provide necessary care and services to the resident when a limitation is deemed unavoidable. The resident's condition should continue to be assessed and documented to determine improvement, or that it does not deteriorate within the limits of recognized pathology or the normal aging process.

Any resident denied use of a motorized wheelchair because of a general policy prohibiting their use should be immediately assessed and accommodated in accordance with 42 CFR 483.10(l) and 42 CFR 483.25(a) (l)(ii).

**If you have any question regarding this issue, you will need to contact your Survey Monitor.**