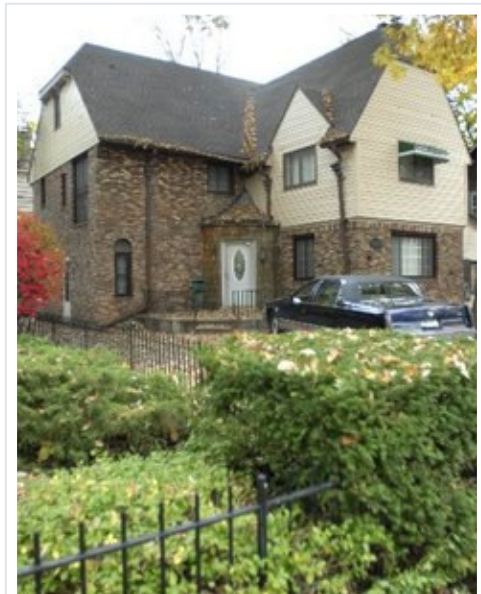




Beard Street home has history of abuse allegations, other red flags, as task force investigation continues

By Laura Misjak | The Flint Journal

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Flint Journal file photo

The adult foster care home at 1325 Beard St.

FLINT, Michigan — Neighbors say there were red flags about the adult foster care home on Beard Street — warnings that were echoed in state documents about abuse allegations, a frightened resident who fled to police and missing paperwork.

But it wasn't until **two elderly people recently died** under the care of the home's operator, Victoria Chapman, that residents were removed from the home.

Now, authorities are looking into a third death, which occurred five years ago at the home at 1325 Beard St.

Neighbors want to know: What took authorities so long to investigate?

"It's unfortunate," said Tom Finn, who lives down the street from the home. "This has been a snafu from day one. We started complaining a long time ago that this is no way to treat old people."

Officials with the state Department of Human Services declined to comment on the home, saying it's become a legal matter.

An investigation into the Chapman home, led by the Genesee County Elder Abuse Task Force, intensified this month after the deaths of the two elderly women under Chapman's care in two separate homes, said Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.

Multiple attempts to reach Chapman and her attorney Gregory Bator were unsuccessful.

A 91-year-old woman who weighed 90 pounds and who investigators believe wasn't given regular medications died at the Beard Street home March 9, Pickell said.

In February, a 72-year-old woman weighing 64 pounds died at a home on Stanley Road in Mt. Morris Township. Pickell said state records showed the woman was under Chapman's care and was supposed to be living in the Beard Street home. The task force was notified by Mt. Morris Township police of the woman's death. The woman had multiple bed sores on her body, Pickell said.

Pickell said the cause of death in the 2005 case was listed as heart failure, but no autopsy was done. He would not reveal details of the case, including the gender of the resident who died, but he did say that resident appeared to have been underweight.

The investigation will remain open for at least the next few weeks, as the task force looks into the medical history of the three people who died to determine exactly what caused their deaths, Pickell said.

The task force began looking at the Beard Street home in June, after a frightened adult foster care resident left the home on foot in the middle of the night, arriving at the police station an hour later to tell authorities she was afraid to go back because of the abuse she had endured several times, DHS records show.

The complaint also launched a state investigation and in October, investigators recommended revoking Chapman's license, but the home continued to operate while Chapman appealed the findings.

The county task force searched the Beard Street home on March 9, after the two women's deaths and decided to remove the remaining residents.

"It's been at least six months that these vulnerable people were living in there, and it's rodent-infested and the squalor," Pickell said. "There's no legitimate excuse for it. These conditions were horrible and it never should have happened."

On March 12, two Beard Street residents — a man and woman — were taken from Chapman's care and transported to Hurley Medical Center.

The man was placed in a different adult foster care home last week and the woman was transferred to a Pontiac hospital.

Pickell believes there are other patients that were supposed to be living in the Beard Street facility and he's investigating their whereabouts. He did not have an exact number.

Several neighbors of the Beard Street home, some of whom asked not to be identified, are wondering why residents weren't removed from the home months ago.

"It took them too long to catch up to them, but at least they caught up to them," Finn said.

The task force also is looking into other adult foster care facilities operated by Victoria Chapman or linked to Chapman's mother, **Mary Chapman, a former adult foster care provider**, Pickell said.

Mary Chapman has been linked to 15 other properties in Genesee County either through electric or water bills, Pickell said. Her name is on the water bill at the Beard Street home.

Mary Chapman's adult foster care license revoked in 2005 after multiple residents were found to have wandered away from a Holly Township facility she operated, including one resident who died after being hit by a car. Under state law, she cannot have contact with AFC residents for up to 10 years.

State DHS workers visited the Beard Street home Dec. 28 to investigate the link between Mary and Victoria Chapman and the facility, two days after The Flint Journal reported on it.

Staff writer Kristin Longley contributed to this report.

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