

# DEADLY DRUGS MISUSED IN U.S. NURSING FACILITIES

## AARP helps family win damages in suit over wrongful death

**W**hen the family of Bobby Glenn Tweed made the difficult decision to have him admitted to a nursing home in January 2013, little did they realize he would have just months left to live. While diagnosed with dementia, Tweed, 78, was still a vigorous man.

But without his family's consent, Tweed was given psychotropic drugs that are known to be fatal among older patients with dementia. In 10 months, he was dead.

The dangerous overuse of psychotropic drugs in nursing facilities received widespread national attention from an *AARP Bulletin* investigative report in the July-August 2014 issue.

"After that story, we started hearing from people all over the country whose loved ones suffered because they had received these drugs often without consent," said Kelly Bagby, senior attorney with AARP Foundation Litigation.

With the help of AARP Foundation lawyers, Tweed's family settled a wrongful death lawsuit against the nursing home and others that were responsible for caring for their father. Terms of the settlement are confidential.

A similar lawsuit against a nursing home in Delaware, filed by AARP Foundation attorneys and others, is still pending.

"These lawsuits are among the efforts of AARP Foundation to help address this nationwide health crisis," Bagby said. "Unfortunately, what happened to Mr. Tweed has happened to countless others."

Care providers have justified the use of psychotropic drugs for patients whom they see as disruptive or at risk of harming themselves.

But far too often, the practice is done for the convenience of understaffed nursing homes where the care is inadequate, according to experts.



Bobby Glenn Tweed with daughter Robin Keller, shortly before his death