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HEALTHCARE

How much is 'hospital dumping' costing RI? A look at the numbers

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So-called "hospital dumping" – in which nursing home and assisted-living residents are hospitalized and then not allowed to return to their facility instead of being properly discharged – is a hard problem to quantify.

But a few numbers help tell the story.

30: The number of days' notice that residents of long-term care facilities and their families are supposed to receive before they can be evicted. The 30-day notice period is intended to give them time to appeal or find a new placement.

131: The number of 30-day discharge notices that the Rhode Island State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office received between July 2024 and July 2025. State ombudsman Lori Light cautioned that this number doesn't fully capture the scope of the issue, since many patients are dumped without proper notice.

23: The number of cases of improper hospital dumping that the ombudsman's office learned about during the 2024 calendar year. Light said this is likely an underestimate, since it only includes cases where the family or the hospital contacted her office.

$9 million: A conservative estimate for how much Brown University Health, including Rhode Island Hospital and Miriam Hospital, spent in 2024 to care for patients who no longer required hospitalization but could not be discharged to a care facility. Hospital dumping was the cause of many, but not all, of these cases.

4,000: The approximate number of nursing home patients with dementia in 2015, according to an article in the Rhode Island Medical Journal. **339:** The number of nursing home beds designated for dementia care in Rhode Island, according to figures provided by the state Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Those beds are spread across nine facilities.