

Eli's Rehab Report

Protect Your Patients From Scam Artists

Don't forget: Sometimes it's an in-house job.

If your inpatient rehab facility's residents don't know how to distinguish an employee from a con artist, they could be in deep trouble.

Consider this: Joanne Ayoubé posed as a physical therapist at **HealthSouth Sugar Land Rehabilitation Hospital**, where she met -- and eventually checked out -- an 95-year-old dementia patient, the Houston Chronicle reports.

For the next two weeks, Ayoubé withheld the patient's medication and began siphoning his money to the tune of \$65,000. The con continued until Ayoubé attempted to change the patient's death benefits, which made authorities suspicious, according to the Chronicle.

Ayoubé was arrested and is now being held without bond on charges of theft from an elderly person, according to the Fort Bend County District Attorney's office. She faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Lesson learned: While the target of Ayoubé's con couldn't help himself, criminals could easily run the same scam on less vulnerable patients. Teach them how to identify your staffers and educate them on how to share any concerns they may have about your employees.