

Eli's Hospice Insider

Fraud & Abuse: Massive Hospice Kickback Scheme Features Bribes Including NBA Tickets

Feds announce charges in 3 separate hospice cases.

Doctors, nurses, an executive, and more have been charged in a fraud case centered around the Bay Area's largest home health agency and a related hospice.

Amity Home Health Care in San Francisco paid kickbacks to marketers, doctors, and other medical professionals in exchange for the certification or referral of patients for home health or hospice services, the **Department of Justice** says in a release.

Amity and some of its employees bribed individuals associated with hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and doctors' offices to induce those individuals to send patients to Amity and hospice **Advent Care Inc.** Amity often disguised the kickbacks as payroll, phony medical directorships, entertainment, reimbursements, gifts, or donations, federal complaints allege. The \$8 million in bribes included Golden State Warriors tickets, Louis Vuitton bags, and "literal envelopes of cash," reports the Mercury News.

Amity CEO **Amanda Singh** and her employees allegedly paid cash for each patient referral and for making introductions to physicians, case managers, or other health care professionals who could refer patients, according to the DOJ. The feds also have charged 13 physicians, five nurse/case managers, and one social worker. Nonclinical staff charged include a marketing director and five marketers.

The government charged 28 people, as well as the HHA and hospice. Doctors and other defendants with "ruffled clothes, muffled hair, and untucked shirts appeared stunned" as a federal judge read the charges against them in court, the News says.

"This is the largest cash-for-patients scheme ever charged criminally in the Northern District of California," U.S. Attorney **David L. Anderson** says in the DOJ release.

Meanwhile: Elsewhere in California, four individuals face criminal charges in two separate California hospice fraud cases.

Antonio Olivera, Emelita Cephass, and **Martin Canter** allegedly participated in a hospice kickback scheme centered on **Mhiramarc Management** in Downey, and Olivera was also charged with Medicare fraud, the DOJ says in a release.

Hospice owner **John O'Brien** was charged with health care fraud conspiracy in a separate case, the DOJ says.