

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Hospice Administrator's Murder Conviction May Make Life Harder For Other Hospices

It's not unusual these days to see home health agency and hospice executives in the fraud and abuse spotlight for Medicare fraud. But in Texas, a hospice administrator has grabbed headlines for a more serious crime, potentially sowing seeds of distrust against hospice providers.

A jury found **Monica Patterson**, former head of **Comfort House Services Inc.** in McAllen, guilty of capital murder for killing the husband of a former patient to gain access to his money and estate, according to press reports. Patterson was also found guilty of theft from Knell's estate, and from her hospice employer.

After Patterson had been named payee upon death on 96-year-old Knell's bank accounts and stocks, and was appointed executor and beneficiary of his will, she ordered a "flunky" to smother him at home, prosecutors said in the five-week trial.

Since the state didn't seek the death penalty, Patterson's conviction carries an automatic life sentence without parole. She hails from a politically prominent family, and is daughter of a former San Juan mayor and sister of a judge, notes the San Antonio Express-News.