

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Hospice Owner Faces Nearly 15 Years In Prison

A former hospice owner convicted of Medicare fraud has drawn a whopping 14.5-year prison sentence. He also was ordered to repay \$16.2 million in restitution to Medicare and \$16.2 million in a forfeiture money judgment.

Philadelphia-based **Home Care Hospice Inc.** billed Medicare more than \$14 million for services that were medically unnecessary or never provided, the **Department of Justice** says in a release. HCH owner **Matthew Kolodesh**, aka **Matvei Kolodech**, was convicted of diverting \$9.6 million from HCH's operating account for his own personal use. He used the money for extensive renovations to his house, travel expenses, college tuition for his son, and a common purchase for Medicare fraudsters — a luxury automobile, prosecutors said.

Kolodesh and his co-conspirator exchanged sham medical director, advisor, or hospice physician payments for referrals, DOJ says. Kolodesh also ordered a mass discharge of patients when the hospice hit its cap, and swapped patients to avoid the cap, among other transgressions, prosecutors argued.

"Nurses and other staff participated in a massive fraud that involved altering patient records to make patients appear eligible for hospice services, when in reality they were not," the DOJ notes. "HCH even tricked Medicare auditors."

Plus: The DOJ has filed a related False Claims Act suit against Kolodesh, his wife and sham HCH CEO **Malvina Yakobashvili**, Executive Director and owner Alex Pugman, and Pugman's wife and HCH Development Executive **Svetlana Ganetsky**, the agency says in a release. The whistleblower lawsuit focuses on General Inpatient care.