

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: More Charges Filed In High-Profile Passages Fraud Case

Two top executives at now-shuttered **Passages Hospice**, plus the hospice itself, are facing Medicare fraud charges.

Back in January, Passages co-owner **Seth Gillman** was charged with fraud (see Eli's Hospice Insider, Vol. 7, No. 3). According to prosecutors, Lisle, Ill.-based Passages billed Medicare for medically unnecessary GIP care and kept ineligible patients on service, sometimes for years. Now co-administrator Gwen Hilsabeck, director of nurses Carmen Velez, and director of clinical services **Angela Armenta** have been charged, the **Department of Justice** says in a release.

The execs and Passages allegedly paid bonuses to nursing directors and certified nursing assistant directors, including Velez and Armenta, to increase the number of patients on GIP, the DOJ says. In addition, they offered incentives, such as payments to nursing homes based on the number of patients on GIP care to increase Passages' patient census, the indictment alleges.

And then in August and September 2009, Gillman, Hilsabeck, Passages, and Velez allegedly conspired to obstruct a federal audit by agreeing to alter patient files that had been requested by contractor TrustSolutions, the DOJ says.