

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: Whistleblower Suit Settlement Dogs Hospice

The hospice that settled a whistleblower lawsuit filed by a competitor is back in court — this time defending against former business associates.

**Background:** In a 2004 qui tam-filing, Little Rock-based **Arkansas Hospice** alleged that **Hospice Home Care Inc.** billed for patients who resided in nursing homes at the general inpatient (GIP) level when they really only qualified for — and HHC only furnished — routine hospice care. HHC used the GIP billing to tell patients and referral sources that the patients wouldn't have to pay for their nursing home costs, because room and board would be covered under the GIP payment. The government intervened in the case in 2009 and HHC settled for \$2.7 million.

Now two business partners, **Wellspring Hospice Solutions** of Texarkana, Texas and **NEA Hospice** of Garland County, have filed suit against HHC, reports the Arkansas Business newspaper. Wellspring says it did work for the hospice that it didn't pay for, and that HHC backed out of a stock purchase agreement. NEA says HHC reneged on the purchase of one of its locations after receiving money from NEA.

**Cecilia Troppoli** and her sister, Dr. **Theresa Travis**, started HHC in 1992. Wellspring, which claims its management brought HHC back from the brink of bankruptcy after the OIG settlement, filed suit because HHC is in negotiations for an \$18 million sale, the company claims.