

Shocking COVID Cover-up: Hollywood Nursing Home Forges Death Certificate to Hide its COVID Problem; CPM Assists Family to Sue for Accountability

Daughter of deceased Vet and retired LA County Public Works employee demands LA close HPHC immediately and asks District Attorney to investigate
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84-year old Vincent Martin died of COVID-19 on April 4, 2020 at Hollywood Premier Healthcare Center ("HPHC") (a/k/a Serrano North Convalescent Hospital). In late April HPHC became one of a handful of facilities in LA County where the National Guard was deployed to help those in need. This help came too late for many of the residents who lost their lives.

Shockingly, HPHC is still operating and is now exclusively taking COVID-19 patients. Daughter Kathy Sessinghaus states: "It is unfathomable that the doors of HPHC remain open, much less that they are allowed to care for COVID-19 patients given their track record of allowing infections and deaths. My heart breaks for the other families that have lost loved ones at HPHC, as well as the staff that became infected at the facility – the District Attorney needs to investigate and close this nursing home."

As alleged, HPHC has one of the worst outbreaks of COVID-19 in the United States; at least sixteen (16) elderly residents are now dead and seventy-two (72) residents have been infected, along with thirty-seven (37) staff (109 infections.) Mr. Martin's wife and daughters filed suit to expose how COVID-19 was allowed to rage uncontrolled through HPHC at the expense of both residents and staff.

As alleged in the Complaint, HPHC's owners and managers had a long-standing practice of keeping the nursing home understaffed and skirting safety and infection controls. The facility was cited for failing to follow

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infection protocols and for not using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in 2019. Mr. Martin's family was alarmed to see that the staff failed to wear PPE even as the facility entered lockdown for COVID-19.

HPHC has a sordid backstory, according to court records. One of the owners of HPHC, Benjamin Landa, was found liable for human trafficking of Filipino nursing staff last year, and the nursing home's doctor, Marcel Filart was named as having received kickbacks in an illegal Medicare/Medi-Cal scam that resulted in a \$42 million dollar settlement with the U.S. Government—all these facts were unknown to residents and their families and form the backdrop for the tragedy and numerous deaths at HPHC:

As alleged, HPHC's own Administrator contracted COVID-19 in March and as COVID-19 gained a toe hold in the facility, the owners and operators hid the outbreak from families. Vince Martin would have never tested positive for COVID-19 had his wife and two daughters not insisted on the test - the positive test results came too late.

At one point only two nurses were caring for eighty-three residents, including Mr. Martin. One staff member claimed to be staying up 20 hours at a time, and the facility had to have the California National Guard come in at one point.

Shockingly, after HPHC's deficient protocols led to 109 staff and residents becoming COVID-19 positive, HPHC has switched to a business model of only accepting COVID-19 patients.

Patricia L. McGinnis, Executive Director of California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform ("CANHR") states that *"the COVID-19 pandemic is exposing the dirty reality of the nursing home business - the residents of HPHC stood no chance when the pandemic hit they were living at a facility that was already understaffed."*

Jamie Court, President of Consumer Watchdog, states that *"The allegations paint a horrifying portrait of a death trap where seniors are given a death sentence and their families are lied to about it. This case is the poster child for why we cannot allow the nursing home industry to limit its legal accountability to families through the executive order it is asking the Governor to sign."*

Anne Marie Murphy, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, states that *"this is not a situation where a well-run nursing home was caught off guard by the pandemic - HPHC's outrageous and dangerous practices predate the pandemic. The 109 staff and residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 deserve answers, as well as the families of all who have died."*

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Gary Praglin, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, added *"it is beyond an outrage that a facility like this for seniors was allowed to operate - let alone charge incredible fees."* Gary Praglin also noted, *"We are shocked and outraged to learn that HPHC is now only taking COVID patients. HPHC has now become a COVID profit center. This lawsuit shines a light on deadly nursing homes that cover up their COVID outbreaks so that they can protect their bottom line. The AG should crack down on unqualified nursing homes in order to protect the public."*