

SENIOR CARE POLICY BRIEFING



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NEWSFLASH

- An operator of several unlicensed assisted living homes in Texas, Regla “Su” Becquer, is now [facing a murder charge](#) after the January death of resident Kelly Pankratz was ruled a homicide due to mixed drug toxicity. Becquer, already charged with abandoning a resident and withholding care, is linked to multiple unlicensed homes under investigation for abuse, neglect, and over 20 deaths. **What will it take to persuade state and federal policymakers to implement stronger rules and oversight for assisted living?**
- A [new study revealed](#) that increasing the hours registered nurses (RN) spend with assisted living residents with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias is linked to a decrease in injury-related emergency department (ED) visits. RNs play a crucial role by providing vigilant surveillance and care oversight, which helps reduce injury risks. RNs’ ability to assess residents immediately after a fall or injury can often prevent unnecessary ED visits.

LTC BY THE NUMBERS

- The [Justice Department’s 2024 National Health Care Fraud Enforcement Action](#) recovered over \$2.75 billion in false claims and charged 193 defendants in criminal cases, many involving nursing homes, home health or hospice agencies, and assisted living providers.

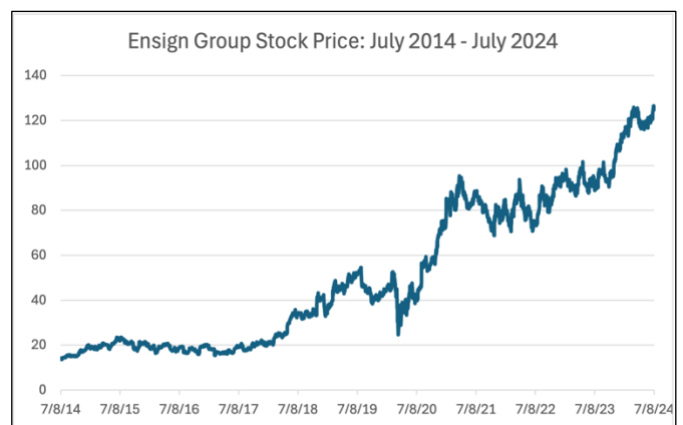
- ⇒ Notable cases include owners and operators of various healthcare facilities submitting fraudulent Medicare claims, paying illegal kickbacks, and billing for services not rendered or unnecessary.
- ⇒ Additionally, several individuals were charged with stealing narcotics and credit cards from residents under their care.

“As alleged in the information, Pribble, while working as a Registered Nurse in a nursing home, flushed a patient’s catheter with vinegar, causing chemical burns to the victim’s bladder. Pribble obtained the vinegar from the facility’s kitchen after she was unable to locate the appropriate medical-grade solution ordered by the patient’s physician.”

- [DOJ case summary](#) for Lori L. Pribble of Indiana

GET THE FACTS: BIG CHAIN, BIG PROFITS

- While nursing home lobbyists claim that they don’t get enough money to provide even minimum safe staffing levels, the industry continues to be attractive to sophisticated, profit-driven investors.
 - ⇒ In July, [Zach’s Equity Research](#) advised investors to buy shares in The Ensign Group, one of the largest US nursing home chains.
 - ⇒ In May, [McKnight’s](#) reported that “Ensign Group has ‘remarkable momentum’ after a record first quarter.
- While Ensign’s stock price increased by over 800% in the last 10 years, federal data indicate that Ensign’s nursing homes perform below average overall on both health inspection and staffing ratings.



The [Ensign Group’s stock price](#) has increased from \$14.23 to \$125.02 over the last 10 years. Ensign’s revenue for the quarter ending March 31, 2024 was \$1.010B, a 13.9% increase year-over-year.

Stockholders have flourished. How have residents & families fared?

Data source: www.macrotrends.net/.