

Problem Oak Park nursing home may have changed names to hide ownership

Names change, but nursing homes stay the same

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By **Devin Rose**
Staff Reporter

A lawyer representing the family of an 80-year-old dementia patient who was killed in an Oak Park nursing home allegedly by another resident said he's familiar with the practice of individuals transferring ownership of problematic nursing facilities back and forth.

That appears to be the case with Oak Park Healthcare, 625 N. Harlem Ave., where Anibal Calderon was struck by a 66-year-old resident in his same ward in February. Calderon died Feb. 14 of a brain injury and a wrongful death lawsuit filed by his family is pending.

"We find that in the nursing home industry, bad homes sometimes transfer ownership between each other," said Steve Levin, of the Chicago firm Levin and Perconti. He said the exchanges make it difficult to know who the owner is in these situations.

According to corporate searches on the Illinois Secretary of State's website, several people have had connections to the Harlem Avenue facility over the years. The site lists David Arnin as the active agent for Oak Park Healthcare Center LLC, the company that the lawsuit names as the defendant and which owns, operates and holds the license for the center. The agent change date is listed as May 2.

But David Aronin was the active agent name that appeared in a search for Harlem Real Estate LLC, a company that was listed on the Cook County Recorder of Deeds website as the grantor of a mortgage to the facility on April 30. The agent change date was March 1.

At the time of the lawsuit, the agent of Oak Park Healthcare LLC was Meyer Magence. Magence was also the agent for Fairmont of Oak Park, the former name of the facility. David Aronin is listed as the president of Fairmount.

A message left last week with David Aronin at Extended Care Clinical, LLC, a consulting company serving the long-term care community, was unreturned.



Oak Park Healthcare, 625 N. Harlem Ave.

Lawsuit could take a year

Steve Levin said he hopes that Oak Park Healthcare will suggest an early resolution to the family of Anibal Calderon, but it could be a year before that happens.

Since the suit was filed in March, the complaint and summons have been served on the facility and they have retained a lawyer, Levin said. A call to the lawyer, Omar Fayeze, was not returned Friday.

The facility will answer the complaint and the discovery process will begin. Levin said during the process his firm will serve papers on the home to find out the facts and circumstances surrounding Calderon's death. Once the firm is sent information, they'll take depositions from nursing home employees and family members before a resolution occurs.

"The family is anxious to get the lawsuit moving so that justice can be obtained," Levin said. He added they hope that current or former employees at the home will come forward.

A search of Careplus Management Inc. revealed that David Aronih was the active agent as of May 3. Levin said at the time of the lawsuit that Careplus managed and controlled the facility. The president listed in that search is Sherwin Ray, who has the same Evanston address as the agent of the three companies.

Ray holds half of the ownership for Oak Park Healthcare, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, which regulates the state's nursing homes. Jakob Bakst holds the other half. A phone number provided by IDPH for both of them was not in service. "They've owned other homes that have experienced similar problems" in Joliet and East Peoria, Levin said. He added he is aware that they trade ownership interests.

In the nursing home business, Levin said the person licensed by the state to operate the home and the person who owns the land and building are oftentimes related. "So it could be that the owner of the land and building has sold their interest to someone else who's leasing it to the same licensee."

Melaney Arnold, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Public Health, which regulates the state's nursing homes, said the agent is just the legal contact for any given entity.

"As long as the agent of a corporation/LLC is registered with the Secretary of State, there is no impact to the IDPH Office of Health Care Regulation," she said in an email. She could not say why agents would frequently change.

Arnold said the department returned to the facility on April 6 in response to the February incident and it was found to be in compliance with no outstanding deficiencies. She said it has had the same owners since 2000 and there is no pending change of ownership.