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Hillcrest Nursing Home Loses Federal Funding, Inches Closer to Closure

The facility will lose its Medicare and Medicaid payments at the end of this week, and only about 40 residents remain.

By [Karen Sorensen](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 13, 2012

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[Hillcrest Nursing and Rehab Center](#) will stop receiving Medicare and Medicaid payments at the end of this week, and the targeted-to-close facility is down to just 40 residents, an [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) spokesman said.

State staff have been monitoring the 777 N. Draper nursing home on a daily basis since the public health department announced in April it would revoke Hillcrest's state license and close the [Joliet](#) facility, IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said.

Myriad problems, including two suspicious resident deaths within a six-month period, allegations of sexual and physical assaults, and failure to monitor prescription drugs, have been documented by the state.

Hillcrest owner Eric A. Rothner was given a 30-day notification of the impending Medicare and Medicaid cutoff on May 15, Arnold said. All payments will cease on June 15, she said.

As for the state's decision to shut down the nursing home, Rothner has appealed and the next court hearing is Aug. 27.

Arnold said it's possible the nursing home could remain open were it to be sold or go into receivership, a scenario under which new management would take over the day-to-day operations with a plan to address the ongoing problems.

Right now, the state's chief concern is ensuring there are no further patient injuries, dangerous situations or care violations and making sure residents and their families know their rights, especially when it comes to how and where patients can be moved, she said.

Rothner owns or co-owns several other nursing homes, and state officials want families to know there is no obligation to relocate relatives to another of Rothner's facilities, as some have been told, she said.

Hillcrest is licensed for 168 patient beds, and right now only about 40 remain filled, Arnold said.

"Our chief concern is making sure the residents there are safe," she said.

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In addition to the state case, the nursing home is also facing a personal injury lawsuit stemming from [New Charges for Patients with Libram Switch](#) a fellow patient. The suit filed by Chicago firm Levin & Perconti alleges that "Hillcrest maintained a dangerous environment, failed to properly monitored residents

with known violent backgrounds, did not implement policies to prevent resident abuse, and failed to report abuse to the IDPH or the victim's family," [according to the firm's Web site.](#)

The firm also says that state investigators, in the course of looking into the burning incident, found that another resident – a 26-year-old man with bipolar disorder and ADHD – abused at least 23 other residents, according to the Web said

Attorney Steve Levin wrote, "Resident accounts revealed that this 26-year old male resident exposed himself, sexually assaulted both male and female residents, urinated on another resident, and used crack, cocaine, and (synthetic marijuana)."

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