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NURSING HOME EXECUTIVE AGREES TO PERMANENT EXCLUSION IN SETTLEMENT WITH OIG

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced today that the president and chairman of the board of Pleasant Care Corporation, Emmanuel Bernabe, has agreed to be excluded permanently from Federal health care programs following an investigation of substandard care at nursing homes formerly operated by Pleasant Care. The exclusion of Emmanuel Bernabe is the result of an OIG investigation regarding allegations of substandard care provided at Pleasant Care nursing facilities between 2003 and 2007.

OIG alleged that under Mr. Bernabe's management, Pleasant Care put nursing home residents at risk by providing care that failed to meet professionally recognized standards. The alleged failures included providing inadequate hydration and nutrition, failing to administer appropriate wound care, and maintaining inadequate staffing levels.

"This settlement reflects our commitment to ensuring that executives who are ultimately responsible for care furnished in nursing homes are held accountable when those homes fail to provide quality care," said Inspector General Daniel R. Levinson. "It is critical that boards and management make compliance with professionally recognized standards of care a priority at all levels of their organizations."

OIG has the authority to exclude from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal health care programs any individual or entity that OIG determines has caused items or services that failed to meet professionally recognized standards of health care to be furnished to patients. OIG exclusions protect the integrity of the Federal health care programs and protect beneficiaries from risk of harm by untrustworthy individuals and entities.

Until March 2007, Pleasant Care was the second largest nursing home chain in the State of California, operating more than 29 different facilities in 14 counties. Pleasant Care currently does not manage any nursing facilities or provide services to patients. Mr. Bernabe contested OIG's allegations and denied any liability. No judgment or finding of liability has been made against Mr. Bernabe.