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<https://www.newstimes.com/business/article/slain-nurse-s-husband-sues-health-care-company-19442430.php>

Slain nurse's husband sues health care company, alleging it ignored employees' safety concerns



FILE - Reach House, a halfway house for sex offenders where visiting nurse Joyce Grayson was found dead, sits atop a small hill, Nov. 21, 2023, in Willimantic, Conn. The husband of the visiting nurse who was killed during an appointment with a convicted rapist filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday, May 6, 2024 alleging her employer repeatedly ignored workers' safety concerns about treating some patients with mental illness and violent pasts. (AP Photo/Pat Eaton Robb, File)



FILE - This undated photo shows Michael Reese who is the main suspect in the killing of nurse Joyce Grayson in Willimantic, Conn., on Oct. 28, 2023. The husband of the visiting nurse who was killed during an appointment with a convicted rapist filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday, May 6, 2024 alleging her employer repeatedly ignored workers' safety concerns about treating some patients with mental illness and violent pasts. (Connecticut Department of Corrections via AP, file)



FILE - This undated photo provided by Kyle Ellsworth shows Joyce Grayson. The husband of the visiting nurse who was killed during an appointment with a convicted rapist filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday, May 6, 2024 alleging her employer repeatedly ignored workers' safety concerns about treating some patients with mental illness and violent pasts. (Kyle Ellsworth via AP, File)

BY DAVE COLLINS
ASSOCIATED PRESS
May 6, 2024

The husband of a Connecticut visiting nurse who was killed during an appointment with a convicted rapist filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday, alleging her employer repeatedly ignored workers' safety concerns about treating dangerous patients.

Ronald Grayson sued Elara Caring, its affiliated companies and others over the killing of his wife, [Joyce Grayson](#), a 63-year-old mother of six who was found dead in the basement of a halfway house in Willimantic on Oct. 28. She was strangled and suffered multiple blunt force injuries, authorities said. Elara Caring, based in Dallas, Texas, denies the allegations.

"For years prior to October 28, 2023, employees of Elara Caring affiliates experienced multiple, repeated instances in which they were verbally, physically and sexually harassed, assaulted, attacked, yelled at, chased, threatened, punched, kicked, grabbed and brushed up against by mentally unstable and/or violent patients of Elara Caring," according to the lawsuit, which seeks undisclosed damages.

Instead of addressing nurses' concerns, the lawsuit alleges, the company encouraged employees to focus on increasing profitability while nurses were "chastised, shamed and gaslit, led to believe that they were overreacting." Staff were "required to treat patients who were dangerous, mentally unstable and, frequently, unsuitable for home health care services," the lawsuit says.

The suit, filed in Middletown Superior Court, also accuses the company of failing to implement a policy allowing escorts or other staff to accompany nurses when they visit potentially dangerous clients.

“Joyce Grayson’s death was entirely preventable and those who failed to protect her from a violent offender should be held accountable,” said **Kelly Reardon**, a lawyer for Grayson’s family.

Elara Caring called the allegations “unwarranted” in a statement released Monday. The company says it provides home care for more than 60,000 patients in 17 states.

Joyce Grayson had an appointment to administer medication to Michael Reese that morning. Reese, who was on probation after serving 14 years in prison for stabbing and sexually assaulting a woman in 2006 in New Haven, [is charged with murder and other crimes](#) in the nurse’s death. His lawyers have not returned messages seeking comment.

Elara repeated previous comments it made saying Connecticut officials determined Reese was not a danger to the community and were responsible for monitoring and managing his activities.

“Elara Caring provided services only after Connecticut’s Department of Correction, Board of Pardons and Parole, and the Judicial branch determined it was safe to put Reese back into the community,” the statement said. “Joyce Grayson was a trusted friend, colleague, and mentor. We remain devastated and angered by her loss.”

The killing spurred a call for greater protections for home health care workers in Connecticut and across the country. Connecticut lawmakers are now considering a bill that would improve safety for health care workers.

Grayson’s family is also asking for permission to sue the state Judicial Branch, which oversees probation, and the Department of Correction for \$25 million in connection with their oversight of Reese. The Judicial Branch declined to comment and the Correction Department did not return messages. People who want to sue the state need approval of the claims commissioner’s office and the legislature.

The lawsuit also names The Connection, which runs a community treatment program at the halfway house where Grayson was killed. The provider declined to comment on the lawsuit’s allegations.

“The death of Joyce Grayson was a senseless crime, and The Connection continues to mourn her immeasurable loss,” it said in a statement. “We will let the legal process address the root causes of this tragedy.”

Last week, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration [proposed fining Elara Caring about \\$161,000](#) after finding the company failed to protect Grayson.

<https://www.newstimes.com/news/article/joyce-grayson-willimantic-ct-lawsuit-elara-caring-19444192.php>
[NEWS](#)

Husband of CT nurse killed during home visit sues health care company, alleges 'profits over safety'

By [Christine Dempsey](#)

Staff Writer

May 7, 2024

MIDDLETOWN — The husband of visiting nurse Joyce Grayson, who [police say was killed by a patient during a visit to a home for sex offenders](#) last year, is suing the company she worked for, saying it stressed profit over safety.

Ronald Grayson filed the lawsuit against Elara Caring; its affiliates; the homeowner; and a nonprofit organization that it said placed the suspect, Michael Reese, at the Willimantic home.

It was filed Monday in state Superior Court in Middletown.

Elara Caring, the brand for the legal entity BW NHHC Holdco Inc. — known locally as New England Home Care Inc. — said the allegations are unwarranted.

In a written statement, Zach Hausauer, Elara's director of communications, said, "Joyce Grayson was a trusted friend, colleague, and mentor. We remain devastated and angered by her loss. Under the State of Connecticut's model of care, Elara Caring provides in-home health services to previously incarcerated individuals after state criminal and mental health experts have determined they are safe to live in the community."

According to the lawsuit, Elara "created a culture within the company of directing other Elara Caring affiliates, including New England Home Care, Inc., to prioritize profits over employee safety."

"For years prior to October 28, 2023, employees of Elara Caring affiliates experienced multiple, repeated instances in which they were verbally, physically and sexually harassed, assaulted, attacked, yelled at, chased, threatened, punched, kicked, grabbed and brushed up against by mentally unstable and/or violent patients," the lawsuit says. Oct. 28 is the date of the murder of [Grayson, a mother of six, a foster mom and a nurse for more than 30 years.](#)

Employees told supervisors they felt unsafe interacting with certain patients and even that they feared for their lives, the suit alleges, but their concerns were ignored.

Instead, the suit contends, the company “encouraged employees of its Elara Caring affiliates, including New England Home Care, Inc., to focus on increasing profitability.”

The employees who raised concerns about their personal safety “were chastised, shamed and gaslit, led to believe that they were overreacting, that they were being difficult, and that the only way the company could make money is by treating all patients, regardless of employee safety,” the lawsuit alleges.

The goal was to admit “as many patients as possible because they were the most profitable aspect of the business, even if the patients being admitted were violent offenders with severe mental illness who could cause injury and harm to employees,” it says.

The company would not provide a staff member to accompany nurses treating potentially violent patients “because it would cost money and reduce profits,” according to the lawsuit. In addition, Elara also would not provide safety equipment such as panic buttons or mace, “despite being repeatedly asked to do so,” it says.

There was some equipment provided to the staff, the suit says, but it was tablets on which nurses document visits in the presence of the patient, which “resulted in staff being unable to focus exclusively on patients and their behavior to ensure their safety.”

In addition, there were no policies in place to do background checks, address patient criminal histories or to train on how to handle dangerous patients “because it would be too costly and would reduce profits,” according to the lawsuit.

The company also failed to discharge patients who engaged in “non-compliant and inappropriate behavior, such as those who continuously broke into locked medication boxes and safes and failed to keep medical and mental health appointments,” the suit says.

Patient/sex offender

The lawsuit refers to Michael Reese as “a registered sex offender with a violent past and a history of substance abuse and mental illness who was [convicted in 2007](#) of raping, brutally stabbing a woman and leaving her to die.” Reese put the 95-pound sex worker in a chokehold in a New Haven cemetery until she passed out, raped her and stabbed her in the neck, according to the warrant for his arrest on first-degree assault and other charges.

After serving more than 14 years in prison for the crime, he was re-arrested in May 2022 because [he continued to use drugs and drink alcohol in violation of the terms of his probation](#), the lawsuit says.

He served additional time for the probation violation and was released into a residential treatment program for sex offenders in March 2023, it says.

“Michael Reese moved into a halfway house in August of 2023 in Willimantic, Connecticut,” the suit states, referring to the Chapman Street address where Grayson died.

In an interview with Hearst Connecticut Media in November, judicial officials said the home is considered a “scattered site apartment” and it has no staffing, only a case manager who arrives once a week to check on residents.

The lawsuit brings up the lack of staff in the home, adding that there was no escort to accompany Grayson when she visited Reese on Oct. 28 to make sure he took his medication. At least one other sex offender was living in the house at the time, the suit says.

The [warrant for Reese’s arrest on murder charges](#) says Grayson died of asphyxia due to neck compression. She also had blunt force injuries to her head, torso and extremities, and investigators found evidence that Reese tried to sexually assault her, it says.

“Prior to and during her murder, Joyce Grayson suffered extreme emotional and physical agony and horror,” the lawsuit says.

Other defendants

The lawsuit also names a human services agency called The Connection Inc. as a defendant, saying the organization discharged Reese from The January Center, a residential treatment center on the grounds of a Montville prison, the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center.

The agency “failed to provide adequate treatment to Reese at The January Center” and hired “unqualified clinical staff at The January Center who were unable to properly diagnose, treat and make decisions about the disposition of clients, including Reese,” according to the lawsuit.

In August, a few months before Grayson was killed, The Connection put Reese into its Re-entry Assisted Community Housing program, or REACH, placing him in a home on Chapman Street in Willimantic.

“At all relevant times, TCI assured the public that its REACH program and housing would involve intensive and frequent case management of clients that would ensure public safety, as well as assistance to program residents to develop or recover life skills, support systems and motivation necessary to sustain a positive, sober, prosocial and independent lifestyle,” the lawsuit says.

Once Reese was on Chapman Street, the agency failed to oversee interactions between Reese and caregivers, it says, “when it knew about his propensity for violence.”

It also failed to ensure he was complying with mental health treatment and to report his noncompliance and substance abuse to his probation officer, the lawsuit says.

In addition, it did not require that Reese’s caregivers be accompanied by escorts, it says.

Finally, the lawsuit also names the owner of the Chapman Street house, John Walker, as a defendant. Walker, it said, “knew that the residents of his property were engaged in criminal behavioral there, including doing drugs on the premises,” but did not act “to ensure that the residents were not endangering the public with their behaviors.”

For example, Walker failed to install security cameras and to alert police that his tenants, registered sex offenders, “were interacting alone with caregivers, such as Joyce Grayson, and that escorts or security should be provided because this practice was unsafe and posed a risk of danger to these caregivers.”

Neither Walker nor a spokesperson for The Connection could be reached for comment Tuesday afternoon.

While denying the accusations against the home health care company, Elara remains “committed to improving safety practices — working with state policymakers to ensure our caregivers are protected,” said Hausauer, the company spokesperson.

“This ensures we continue to provide essential home health care services to our community’s most vulnerable populations. Along with the broader home care provider community, we welcome an ongoing dialogue to achieve these shared goals.”

https://www.thechronicle.com/news/wrongful-death-suit-grayson-husband-sues-elara-caring/article_3c37916c-0d6d-11ef-9bf6-3bf8f7d653bd.html

Wrongful Death Suit: Grayson husband sues Elara Caring

- NICOLE ZAPPONE @TheChronicleCT
- May 9, 2024



Reach House, a halfway house for sex offenders where Joyce Grayson was killed, sits atop a small hill in Willimantic. Ronald Grayson, the victim's husband, filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday.
AP/Pat Eaton-Robb

WILLIMANTIC — The husband of the visiting nurse who was killed at a halfway house in Willimantic during the appointment of a convicted rapist filed a wrongful death lawsuit Monday, alleging her employer ignored workers' safety concerns about treating dangerous patients.

Ronald Grayson sued Elara Caring and its affiliated companies for the murder of his wife, Joyce Grayson, a 63-year-old mother of six who was found in the basement of the halfway house in Willimantic.

The suit filed in Middletown Court accuses Elara Caring and its affiliated companies counts of wrongful death and loss of consortium.

NOTE: ARTICLE CONTINUES BUT UNABLE TO COPY



<https://www.fox61.com/video/news/local/520-a07f732a-f20d-4a1d-9836-44782387039e>



<https://www.wfsb.com/2024/05/07/family-murdered-visiting-nurse-files-lawsuit/>

Family of murdered visiting nurse files lawsuit

By [Luke Hajdasz](#)

May. 7, 2024 at 7:20 PM EDT

(WFSB) - The family of Joyce Grayson, the visiting nurse who was murdered last October, [is suing the state and her employer.](#)

The lengthy lawsuit has many defendants. The main one is Elara Caring, the company Grayson worked for.

Her grieving family says they put profits over their people.

"What happened to my mother was a tragedy. But the greater tragedy is that her murder was entirely preventable," said Joyce's daughter Kaitlyn.

Police say one of the men who lived at the Willimantic halfway house was her patient turned killer, Michael Reese.

"I think Elara Caring is out of touch with what's happening in its company," said Kelly Reardon, the lawyer representing the Grayson family.

They say Elara and its affiliates named in the suit knew the bad situations its nurses were in. Yet, they sent these women to the homes of sex offenders alone despite complaints.

"Joyce would be here today if the defendants and the state of Connecticut had taken very simple steps to protect her safety and ensure that violent offenders like Michael Reese released into the community are properly monitored and given the rehabilitation that they need," continued Reardon.

In a statement to Channel 3, Elara says, "We believe the allegations against Elara Caring are unwarranted. We remain committed to improving safety practices – working with state policymakers to ensure our caregivers are protected."

Reese, who is a sex offender, has a violent past, with multiple convictions.

"He was not taken out of the community despite his spiral downward back into criminal behavior," said Reardon.

That's why the family is also going after the state, putting in a claim for \$25 million. They say Reese should've never been released in the first place.

"My mother was a giver and had more to give to our family and the community. Although we grieve her loss, the Grayson family will not rest until this never happens again," said Kaitlyn.

The lawsuit against the state will take time. The claim needs to be approved by the claims commission.

If approved, it goes to court. If denied, the Grayson family lawyers can appeal.

No dollar amount on the suit against Elara has been determined.

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<https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-london/family-files-wrongful-death-lawsuit-in-slain-nurse-case/>

NEW LONDON

Family files wrongful death lawsuit in slain visiting nurse case

by: [Eva Zymaris](#)

Posted: May 7, 2024 / 10:33 AM EDT

Updated: May 8, 2024 / 05:04 AM EDT

NEW LONDON, Conn. (WTNH) — The family of a visiting nurse who was killed in October 2023 in Willimantic has filed a wrongful death lawsuit and filed a separate claim against the state of Connecticut.

Kaitlyn Grayson, one of Joyce Grayson's six children, along with the family's attorney, Kelly Reardon, made the announcement Tuesday at Offices of The Reardon Law Firm in New London.

"What happened to my mother was a tragedy, but the greater tragedy is her murder was entirely preventable," Kaitlyn Grayson said.

The 63-year-old visiting nurse was killed during a medical appointment for a convicted rapist, Michael Reese, in Willimantic on Oct. 28. Officials said she was found in the home's basement, strangled with multiple blunt force injuries.

Reese was [charged with murder and attempted first-degree sexual assault in this case](#). The registered sex offender was Grayson's first appointment of the day.

The wrongful death lawsuit was filed against five defendants, including Grayson's employer, Elara Caring. The lawsuit claims the company failed to take action to protect nurses and put safeguards in place, allegedly ignoring workers' safety concerns when it came to dangerous or mentally unstable patients.

"My family and I know that if those we have filed claims against had taken the safety of home healthcare nurses and the public more seriously, we know she would be here today," Kaitlyn Grayson said. "While we grieve her loss, the Grayson family will not rest until this never happens again."

The lawsuit claims Grayson was "required to treat patients who were dangerous, mentally unstable and frequently, unstable for health care services."

It also alleges the Elara Caring network took no steps to protect nurses, which includes failing to assess patient risk, address safety concerns, inform staff of patient's criminal history and authorize escort and/or second staff member to accompany staff.

Watch the press conference in the video below.

Play Video

Family files wrongful death lawsuit in slain nurse case

A [federal investigation](#) ruled Elara Caring "exposed home healthcare employees to workplace violence from patients who exhibited aggressive behavior and were known to pose a risk to others." The company is facing \$163,627 in [fines for not protecting Grayson](#), according to OSHA.

Elara Caring provided the following statement on Tuesday:

“Joyce Grayson was a trusted friend, colleague, and mentor. We remain devastated and angered by her loss. Under the State of Connecticut’s model of care, Elara Caring provides in-home health services to previously incarcerated individuals after state criminal and mental health experts have determined they are safe to live in the community.

To be clear, Michael Reese remained under the state’s supervision while he lived in the community and received care at his residence. Elara Caring provided services only after Connecticut’s Department of Correction, Board of Pardons and Parole, and the Judicial branch determined it was safe to put Reese back into the community.

We believe the allegations against Elara Caring are unwarranted. We remain committed to improving safety practices – working with state policymakers to ensure our caregivers are protected. This ensures we continue to provide essential home health care services to our community’s most vulnerable populations. Along with the broader home care provider community, we welcome an ongoing dialogue to achieve these shared goals.”

Grayson’s family also filed a \$50 million claim against Connecticut, including the Department of Corrections and Probation Services, alleging that the state should have more closely monitored Reese.

Reardon said the claim seeks damages and requests permission be granted to sue in Superior Court.