

# Placerville elder abuse case ends with hung jury

By Marjie Lundstrom, Sacramento Bee

When 77-year-old Johnnie Esco died in 2008 after a short stay at a Placerville nursing home, her husband of 60 years wanted someone held responsible – civilly and criminally.

Don Esco of Cameron Park settled his civil lawsuit against the El Dorado Care Center and its owner in 2010 for \$2.9 million. The criminal matter ended quite differently this week, with California's attorney general declining to seek a new trial against the facility's former head nurse following a mistrial.

More than five years after the elderly woman's death, an El Dorado County jury failed to reach a verdict in the case against Donna Darlene Palmer, charged with felony elder abuse.

Palmer, the former director of nursing at the facility, was one of two nurses charged criminally last year by the California attorney general's office. At the time, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris' office had announced plans to intensify efforts statewide to bring criminal cases against nursing home administrators and employees whose failings harm vulnerable patients.

**Read the whole story**