

Accountant

Business



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of the of the Submitted JAMES F. ALDERSON - WHITE-HAT ACCOUNTANT

While we usually regard the medical field as being one of the most difficult in which to maintain standards of conduct and practice, the reality is that principles of high conduct and professionalism can be and should be maintained by all workers, no matter what sphere of activity they belong to. The case of James Alderson, an accountant who blew the whistle on the hospital that he worked in, is a wonderful example of a man who knew the odds and yet was determined to do what was right. The principle of accurate and correct disclosure was being violated at the hospital, where the managers asked for two separate sets of accounts to be made with regards to expenses incurred. One overstated expenses aggressively while the second was the true record. It was hoped that the excess amounts, once approved by the IRS, would result in an excess of reimbursement that could be fed into the revenue stream and form a source of revenue for the business. This falsification of accounts is tantamount to fraud. It is known as a 'qui tam' or false claims case (Eichenwald, 1998, 3. 1).

When the amounts involved are quite large, the danger that Alderson faced, even after termination of employment could range from permanent injury to death threats to himself and his family. After his dismissal from service, Alderson and his family were forced to move from his house in Whitefish to a cramped cottage in rural Montana where they lived frugally. It took 13 years for a decision to be made and Alderson to be awarded with damages that were sufficient enough to cover his expenses and let him live a comfortable retirement. The principle that Mr. Alderson committed himself to after watching a partner sign an Audit Report at Arthur Anderson was that the signing had better mean that whatever was being committed to was correct

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and true to the best of the accountant's knowledge and the opinion that they gave was without prejudice and vouched for the integrity of the records that they had checked and audited.

Works Cited

Eichenwald, K. ' He Blew the Whistle, and Giants Quaked'. The New York Times, Oct 18, 1998, pg. 3. 1.