

hud **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Department of Housing and Urban Development – Alphonso Jackson, Secretary
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HUD CHARGES CALIFORNIA LANDLORD WITH REFUSING TO RENT TO DISABLED MAN

*Owner and manager charged with Fair Housing Act violation
for allegedly denying a tenant with HIV a room in a residential care facility*

WASHINGTON— The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced today that it has charged the owner of a five-bedroom residential care facility in San Mateo, Calif., as well as the facility's manager, with violating the Fair Housing Act by denying a room to a man diagnosed with HIV. The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate against persons with disabilities.

The charge alleges that owner Michael Que and his mother, property manager Lolita Sanchez, refused to rent a room to a man with HIV because of what they characterized as residents' concerns about contracting the disease.

HUD's investigation found that the man disclosed his HIV status to residents when he visited the property. After the man's visit, his social worker visited the property and made arrangements for him to rent a shared room that was available at that time. Ms. Sanchez subsequently informed the social worker that she could not rent the room to the man because of residents' concerns about his HIV status.

A hearing on the charges against Michael Que and Lolita Sanchez will be held by a U.S. Administrative Law Judge on July 17, 2007, in the San Francisco area, unless either the complainant or respondent elect to have the case decided by a federal judge in U.S. District Court. An election to go to district court must be made by May 14, 2007.

Housing discrimination charges heard before an administrative law judge carry a maximum civil penalty of \$16,000 for each violation for a first offense, in addition to actual damages for each complainant, injunctive or other equitable relief, and attorneys' fees. Sanctions can be more severe if a respondent has a history of housing discrimination.

FHEO and its partners in the Fair Housing Assistance Program investigate over 10,000 housing discrimination complaints annually. People who believe they are the victims of housing discrimination should contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777 (voice), 800-927-9275 (TTY). Additional information is available at www.hud.gov/fairhousing. Stay on top of the most up-to-date news regarding the Fair Housing Act by signing up for the FHEO RSS Feed at www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/index.cfm.

For more information call Shantae Goodloe at #202-708-0685.

