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Nursing Homes, in Bid to Cut Costs, Prod Patients to Forgo Lawsuits

BY NATHAN KOPPEL
Word Count: 2,236

Nursing-home patients and their families are increasingly giving up their right to sue over disputes about care, including those involving deaths, as the homes write binding arbitration into their standard contracts.

The clause can have profound implications. Nursing homes' average costs to settle cases have begun dropping, according to an industry study, even as claims of poor treatment are on the rise. The industry notes arbitration is slicing the number of patients winning big punitive judgments, the added penalties for severe negligence that can pump up the size of jury awards. Meanwhile consumer advocates, plaintiffs lawyers and even some arbitrators ...

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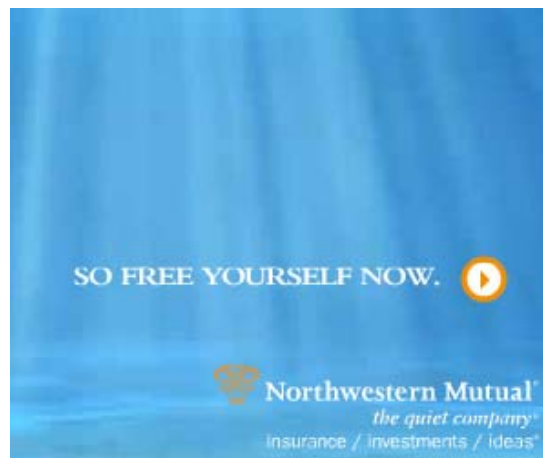
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