

Defendant Worked as Personal Care Aide, Submitted Timesheets for Work That Never Was Performed

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(Washington, DC) – A Maryland man who was employed as a personal care aide pled guilty today to a federal charge of health care fraud stemming from a scheme in which he submitted more than \$66,000 in false claims to the District of Columbia Medicaid program. The announcement was made by U.S. Attorney Jessie K. Liu, Assistant Director in Charge Nancy McNamara of the FBI's Washington Field Office, Special Agent in Charge Maureen Dixon of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) Philadelphia Regional Office, and Inspector General Daniel W. Lucas of the District of Columbia.

Vincent Njong, 48, of Silver Spring, Md., pled guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The Honorable Senior Judge Rosemary M. Collyer scheduled sentencing for Dec. 6, 2018. The charge carries a statutory maximum of 10 years in prison and potential financial penalties. Under federal sentencing guidelines, Njong faces a possible range of six to 12 months in prison and a fine of up to \$20,000. The plea agreement requires him to pay \$66,086 in restitution to the District of Columbia. He also is subject to a forfeiture money judgment in the amount of \$43,209, representing his share of the proceeds from the scheme.

According to a statement of offense submitted at the plea hearing, Njong was a licensed personal care aide. Under the Medicaid program, personal care aides perform services intended to assist Medicaid beneficiaries in carrying out the activities of daily living. These can include helping beneficiaries get in and out of bed, bathe, dress, eat out, take medication, and engage in toileting. To receive personal care services under Medicaid, a beneficiary must obtain a prescription from a doctor.

Between September 2012 and April 2014, Njong caused false claims to be submitted by two home health care agencies to the District of Columbia's Medicaid program for personal care services that he did not provide or that were tainted by the payment of kickbacks to the Medicaid beneficiary. During the time period, Njong was assigned to provide personal care services to two Medicaid beneficiaries. He submitted false timesheets for work that was not provided. Starting in August 2013, for example, he began working full-time as a teacher in Maryland. Notwithstanding his full-time employment, he continued to submit timesheets to the two home health care agencies claiming to be working full-time for them.

In addition, he paid one of the beneficiaries approximately \$100 bi-weekly to sign blank or false statements; he also provided the beneficiary with food or other items of value in exchange for the beneficiary's signature on false timesheets.

Because of Njong's fraudulent conduct, D.C. Medicaid paid \$66,086 to the two home health care agencies. Njong personally received \$43,209 of the fraudulently obtained proceeds.

In announcing the plea, U.S. Attorney Liu, Assistant Director in Charge McNamara, Special Agent in Charge Dixon and Inspector General Lucas commended the work of those who investigated the case from the FBI's Washington Field Office, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, as well as a team from the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the District of Columbia's Office of the Inspector General.

They also expressed appreciation for the assistance of the District of Columbia's Department of Health Care Finance.

They acknowledged the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Arvind K. Lal, Chief of the Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Swanton, who assisted with forfeiture issues; Assistant U.S. Attorney Oliver McDaniel, and Paralegal Specialist Brittany Phillips. Finally, they commended the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Denise A. Simmonds, who investigated and prosecuted the case.