



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
District of Maryland

Erek L. Barron
United States Attorney

Marcia A. Lubin
Public Affairs Specialist

36 South Charles Street
4th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
301-344-4342
FAX 410-962-3091
Marcia.Murphy@usdoj.gov

November 18, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

www.justice.gov/usao/md

Contact MARCIA LUBIN
at (410) 209-4854

SILVER SPRING DENTIST SENTENCED TO MORE THAN TWO YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR SCHEME TO FRAUDULENTLY OBTAIN MEDICAID FUNDS BY RECRUITING MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES THROUGH THE PAYMENT OF KICKBACKS AND BRIBES

Greenbelt, Maryland – U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang today sentenced Edward T. Buford III, age 70, of Silver Spring, Maryland, to 30 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit mail fraud and healthcare fraud. Judge Chuang also ordered Buford to pay \$1,267,630 in restitution.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erek L. Barron; Special Agent in Charge Wayne Jacobs of the Federal Bureau of Investigation - Washington Field Office Criminal Division; Special Agent in Charge Maureen Dixon, Office of Investigations, Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services; Special Agent in Charge Michael McGill of the Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General, Philadelphia Field Division; and Daniel W. Lucas, Inspector General for the District of Columbia.

Buford was a licensed dentist in Washington, D.C. and the owner and Chief Executive Officer of International Dental Associates, Inc. (IDA), a dental clinic located in Washington, D.C. According to his guilty plea, from January 2013 to May 2018, Buford led a scheme to file fraudulent Medicaid claims for dental services to Medicaid beneficiaries and recruited Medicaid beneficiaries to fuel the scheme through the payment of kickbacks and bribes.

Buford caused the submission of Medicaid claims for a variety of dental services, including dentures. As part of the conspiracy, Buford paid kickbacks to patient recruiters in exchange for referring Medicaid beneficiaries to IDA for dental services. At Buford's direction, the recruiters offered cash bribes to beneficiaries to visit IDA and accept dental services. Medicaid paid substantially more for dentures than for many other dental services, including dental cleanings. Buford paid larger cash kickbacks to recruiters—approximately \$50 per beneficiary—for beneficiaries that agreed to be fitted for dentures, and typically paid the recruited beneficiaries \$20 to be fitted for dentures. Buford knew that Medicaid would not have paid the claims had it known they were procured through kickbacks and bribes.

As detailed in the plea agreement, even though dentures required multiple visits to fit and deliver, Buford caused the recruiters and beneficiaries to be paid only for the initial visit—after which Buford could bill Medicaid for the dentures—and numerous beneficiaries never returned to IDA after receiving the cash bribe. Buford stored hundreds of undelivered dentures on IDA's premises, many of

which had been billed to and paid for by Medicaid. As part of the scheme, Buford maintained a post office box in Silver Spring, Maryland as IDA's billing address and received the fraudulently obtained payments at that location.

Based on the amount that Medicaid paid to Buford and IDA for dentures that were not delivered, the actual loss to Medicaid was at least \$1,267,630.

United States Attorney Erek L. Barron commended the FBI, HHS-OIG, the D.C. Office of the Inspector General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, and SSA-OIG for their work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jessica C. Collins and Kelly O. Hayes, who prosecuted the case.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-md and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach>.

#