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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 30, 2017

Fort Pierce Resident Sentenced in Federal Health Care Fraud Scheme

Miguel De Paula Arias, 53, of Fort Pierce, was sentenced to 161 months in prison on charges of health care fraud, false statements related to healthcare and aggravated identity theft.

Benjamin G. Greenberg, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Shimon R. Richmond, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), Robert F. Lasky, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Miami Field Office, Isabel Colon, Regional Director, United States Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration (DOL-EBSA), Jimmy Patronis, Florida Chief Financial Officer, and Sarah J. Mooney, Chief, West Palm Beach Police Department, made the announcement.

According to the indictment, Arias stole the identities of six retired and semi-retired senior citizen physicians and their Medicare accounts used to submit claims for services provided to patients. Arias, utilized fake passports, driver's licenses and other identity documents, to establish bank accounts, mailing addresses and phone answering services in the names of the victim physicians to give the appearance that the physicians were in practice and providing medical care to senior citizens in different locations around the country. Between June 2011 and December 2016, using stolen personal identification information of real senior citizens from around the county, Arias submitted fraudulent and fictitious claims for purportedly providing medical services to Medicare using the victim doctors' identities. Arias had the money paid by Medicare, resulting from this scheme, deposited into the bank accounts he controlled in the victim doctors' names. The doctors, as a result of Arias' crimes, received bills from the Internal Revenue Service for unpaid taxes and from Medicare for repayment of the apparently fraudulent claims. As a result of the fraudulent and fictitious claims submitted by Arias, he was paid more than \$1.6 million.

The court imposed a total sentence of 161 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, restitution to Medicare in the amount of \$1,665,348.03. Arias has been in custody since December 21, 2016. At the conclusion of the hearing, Arias was remanded to the custody of the Bureau of Prisons to serve his sentence.

Mr. Greenberg commended the investigative efforts of the HHS-OIG, FBI, DOL-EBSA, Florida Division of Investigative and Forensic Services, and the West Palm Beach Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ellen L. Cohen and Stephanie Evans.

Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

Component(s):

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