



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR SCHEME SENDS WOMAN TO PRISON

(Beaumont, Texas) A 44-year-old Houston woman has been sentenced to 46 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$1,759,771.59 in restitution for defrauding Medicare. **BECALO (BECKY) UTUK** was sentenced yesterday by United States District Judge Thad Heartfield.

According to information presented in court, Utuk managed a Lufkin company, All Divine Health Services, which supplied motorized wheelchairs to Medicare recipients. Between December 2002 and the Fall of 2003, the company claimed delivery of numerous motorized wheelchairs and billed Medicare just short of \$4 million. Utuk and another employee conspired to submit fraudulent claims to Medicare for the cost of the motorized wheelchairs and accessories that were not medically necessary and were often not delivered to the patient. Utuk submitted claims which resulted in Medicare reimbursing All Divine Health Services approximately \$1.8 million. She then diverted the fraud proceeds for her own personal use and benefit. Utuk pleaded guilty to the charges in June, 2004.

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United States Attorney Matthew D. Orwig was pleased with the sentencing, "Pilfering from Medicare is a severe crime with a just penalty. Fraudulent activities, such as this motorized wheelchair scam, deplete funds that are necessary to care for Medicare recipients that depend on the program."

Orwig encouraged Medicare recipients, their families and health care professionals to remain vigilant in detecting and reporting suspected health care fraud.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Reynaldo P. Morin.

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