

On October 4, 2012, the government announced that its Medicare Fraud Strike Force operations had charged 91 individuals, including doctors, nurses and other licensed medical professionals, for their alleged participation in Medicare fraud schemes involving nearly \$430 million in false billing.

Dozens of individuals were arrested or surrendered as the indictments were unsealed, and the Department of Health and Human Services suspended or took other administrative action against 30 health care providers based upon fraud allegations. Payments to these healthcare providers will be suspended until the completion of the investigation.

The defendants are charged with various schemes, including conspiracy to commit health care fraud, health care fraud, violations of anti-kickback statutes and money laundering. The charges span across participants in multiple areas of health care, and include home health care, mental health services, psychotherapy, physical and occupational therapy, durable medical equipment and ambulance services. Defendants are charged with participating in schemes to submit claims to Medicare for treatments that were medically unnecessary and often never provided. Court documents allege that kickbacks were paid to patient recruiters and Medicare beneficiaries in return for supplying beneficiary information to providers so that the providers could submit fraudulent billing to Medicare for the services. In all, the healthcare providers are accused of conspiring to submit a total of \$429.2 million in fraudulent billing.

The takedown charged defendants in seven cities, including Miami, where 33 defendants were indicted for their participation in schemes involving \$204.5 million in false billings. Sixteen defendants were charged in Los Angeles; as were fourteen in Dallas; seven in Houston; fifteen in Brooklyn; four in Baton Rouge; and two in Chicago.

The government announced that since the strike force was formed in March 2007, 1480 defendants have been charged with falsely billing the Medicare program for more than \$4.8 billion.