



# Department of Justice

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## FORMER EMPLOYEE OF HANGER ORTHOPEDIC GROUP, INC. INDICTED FOR DESTROYING AND FALSIFYING RECORDS IN CONNECTION WITH FEDERAL INVESTIGATION

An indictment was unsealed this morning in federal court in Central Islip, New York, charging LISA CONSTANTINE with destroying and falsifying records in connection with an investigation into fraudulent billing practices at a facility that Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc. (Hanger) operated in West Hempstead, New York. The defendant's arraignment is scheduled later today before United States Magistrate Judge Arlene R. Lindsay at the U.S. Courthouse, 100 Federal Plaza, Central Islip, New York.

The charges were announced by Benton J. Campbell, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Gary Heuer, Special Agent-in-Charge, United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, Office of Investigations ("HHS/OIG"), and Mark J. Mershon, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office.

As alleged in the indictment, Hanger was one of the world's leading providers of orthotic and prosthetic services and products, and operates hundreds of patient-care facilities in the United States, including one in West Hempstead, New York. On June 14, 2004, a local television station broadcast an investigative report in which a then-current Hanger employee described the creation of fraudulent and falsified billing records at Hanger's West Hempstead facility and the participation of Hanger employees in a scheme to defraud. Following the broadcast, the United States Department of Justice, HHS/OIG, and the FBI opened civil and criminal investigations into Hanger's billing practices and the allegations of fraud.

During the investigations, former Hanger employees, including the defendant, were interviewed, and handwriting exemplars were obtained from the defendant to determine whether she had been forging doctors' signatures on prescriptions for which Hanger had sought and obtained reimbursement from public and private insurers. Additionally, as part of the investigations, subpoenas were prepared demanding production of documents containing the defendant's handwriting. On June 9, 2006, HHS agents delivered one of the subpoenas to the defendant at the premises of her new employer. After the HHS agents left, the defendant allegedly identified documents that contained her handwriting, directed co-workers to rewrite some of those documents so that they would not contain her handwriting, and then shredded original documents.

"We have no tolerance for conduct intended to deliberately obstruct a government investigation. Those who do so can expect to be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law," stated United States Attorney Campbell.

HHS/OIG Special Agent-in-Charge Heuer stated, "This case should make clear that employees involved in obstructing federal investigations, including as in this instance an investigation into the defrauding of Medicare, can be held personally accountable for their actions."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Mershon stated, "It isn't always true that the cover-up is worse than the crime, but the concerted effort of this defendant to destroy potential evidence is itself a serious crime and one the FBI takes very seriously."

If convicted, CONSTANTINE faces a maximum sentence of 20 years of imprisonment.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Robert M. Radick and Karin Klapper Orenstein.

The Defendant:

LISA CONSTANTINE

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