



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Edward J. Tarver

Southern District of Georgia

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## **6 DEFENDANTS INDICTED ON \$4 MILLION MEDICARE FRAUD SCHEME**

*Southern District of Georgia prosecution part of investigation of international organized crime ring involving more than \$163million dollar fraud upon Medicare*

**BRUNSWICK, GA:** A federal indictment, unsealed today in the United States District Court in Brunswick, Georgia, charged 6 defendants with a conspiracy to defraud Medicare of over \$4 million. Several of the defendants are also charged with conspiring to launder the proceeds of their fraud and with stealing the identities of doctors and Medicare patients.

The prosecution in the Southern District of Georgia is part of a nation-wide investigation into allegations that more than \$163 million in fictitious claims were submitted to Medicare. The lengthy investigation, led by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General (HHS-OIG), and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), focused upon Armenian American organized crime enterprises and their coordinated efforts to defraud Medicare across the United States. The investigation culminated in arrests today of more than 35 defendants on federal racketeering, health care fraud and other charges filed in Brunswick, Georgia, New York City, Los Angeles, Cleveland and Albuquerque.

United States Attorney Edward J. Tarver said, "This Indictment and today's arrests illustrate that health care fraud is a national problem and that a national response from law enforcement is necessary. The charges announced today also provide additional evidence of the efforts by international organized crime to defraud the Medicare system. This Office will pursue health care fraudsters around the country, in order to bring them to justice."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Brian D. Lamkin stated, "The loss amounts associated with Medicare fraud are staggering and not only provide an enormous strain on the taxpaying public but also deprives those truly in need of these much needed services. The FBI, in conjunction with its law enforcement partners, is well suited to engage these criminal enterprises that have organized to commit wholesale

fraud against the American people and is proud of the role it has played in this investigation.”

“Sophisticated crime rings frequently incorporate medical identity theft into their health care fraud schemes. These schemes deplete scarce Medicare and Medicaid resources and endanger the physicians and patients whose identities have been stolen,” said Special Agent in Charge Derrick L. Jackson, Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Atlanta Region. “Today's arrests send a powerful message to crime rings around the country that OIG will fight to protect Medicare and Medicaid patients and providers and the Nation's taxpayers.”

Mr. Tarver noted that the 6 defendants indicted on federal charges in the Southern District of Georgia include:

ARTHUR MANASARIAN, 58, Armenia,

GEGHAM SARGSYAN, 56, Armenia,

KHOREN GASPARIAN, 27, Armenia,

SAHAK TUMANYAN, 43, Armenia,

HAMSIK TUMANYAN, 38, Armenia,

TONI R. LOWERY, 27, Savannah, Georgia.

Mr. Tarver also stated that federal indictments charging 66 additional defendants were unsealed today in New York City, Los Angeles, Cleveland and Albuquerque.

According to the Indictment unsealed today in the Southern District of Georgia, the defendants, beginning in 2006, allegedly: (1) opened five sham medical clinics, located in Brunswick, Savannah and Macon; (2) stole the identities of both physicians and Medicare beneficiaries located throughout the United States; and, (3) submitted over \$4 million in false claims to Medicare for health care services that were never provided. The Indictment further alleges that four of the defendants, MANASARIAN, SARGSYAN, SAHAK TUMANYAN and HASMIK TUMANYAN, funneled the proceeds of the fraud through various shell companies owned and controlled by SAHAK and HASMIK TUMANYAN, all in order to hide the ill-gotten gains of their scheme to defraud Medicare.

MANASARIAN and SARGSYAN are charged with one count of Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud, which carries a sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000; multiple counts of Health Care Fraud, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000; one count of Money Laundering Conspiracy, which carries with a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a fine up to \$500,000; and multiple counts of Aggravated Identity Theft, each of which requires a 2-year consecutive prison sentence to any other sentence imposed. GASPARIAN is charged with one count of Conspiracy to

Commit Health Care Fraud, which carries a sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. SAHAK and HASMIK TUMANYAN are each charged with one count of Money Laundering Conspiracy, which carries with a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment and a fine up to \$500,000. LOWERY is charged with one count of Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud, which carries a sentence of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

Mr. Tarver stressed that an indictment is only an accusation and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the Government's burden to prove the defendants' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Assistant United States Attorney Brian T. Rafferty is prosecuting the case. For additional information, please contact First Assistant United States Attorney James D. Durham at (912) 341-7842.