



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Georgia

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## **MIAMI MAN SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 11 YEARS IN PRISON ON MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR MEDICARE FRAUD SCHEME**

*Yacht Named "Thank You God" and \$1.3 Million also Forfeited as Proceeds of Fraud*

**SAVANNAH, GA** – **Alfredo Rasco**, 52, from Miami, Florida was sentenced on Wednesday by United States District Court Judge William T. Moore, Jr. to 133 months in prison for his role in defrauding Medicare of approximately \$4 million. Rasco's wife, **Niurka Rasco**, 50, was also sentenced on Wednesday to 3 years probation for her role in the scheme.

United States Attorney Edward J. Tarver said, "Alfredo Rasco and his cohorts stole millions of taxpayer dollars by defrauding Medicare and preying upon vulnerable citizens suffering from life-threatening illnesses. In hatching his scheme, Alfredo Rasco made the mistake of thinking he could evade law enforcement by fleeing Miami and committing his fraud in the Southern District of Georgia. He will now get to spend more than a decade in prison reflecting on that mistake. The stern sentence imposed upon him should serve as a powerful warning to others intent on stealing from taxpayers in this District – this Office, and our law enforcement partners, will investigate and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law."

Brian D. Lamkin, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Atlanta Field Office, stated, "The unbridled greed displayed by the defendant and his associates in this case is a stark reminder of the important role of the FBI's Health Care Fraud Unit and its agents in ensuring that those funds benefit those in need. Individuals who choose to exploit such well intended government funded programs for their own personal gain will always be an investigative priority for the FBI."

"This case demonstrates how hardened criminals are migrating from traditional crimes like drugs into health care fraud," said Derrick L. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge of the HHS Office of Inspector General's Atlanta Office. "This sentence sends a clear message that health care fraud is a serious crime with serious consequences."

The evidence at the guilty plea hearings for the Rascos showed that from December 2005 through March 2008, Alfredo Rasco, aided by Niurka Rasco and others, devised a scheme to

defraud Medicare that involved bribing Medicare beneficiaries afflicted with HIV or AIDS with promises of free food, transportation, and gift cards, to get the patients to come to United Therapy, a healthcare clinic in downtown Savannah. Once at United Therapy, Alfredo Rasco and others used the patients' Medicare information to submit \$6.5 million worth of phony bills to Medicare for infusion services that were not provided to those patients. Before law enforcement put a stop to this fraud, Alfredo Rasco and others stole approximately \$4 million from Medicare through these phony claims.

At the sentencing hearing, the Court heard evidence that Alfredo Rasco was associated with other schemes to defraud Medicare in and around Miami, and that he opened up the fraudulent clinic in Savannah to escape increased law enforcement scrutiny of health care fraud in Miami. The Court also heard evidence that this was not Alfredo Rasco's first brush with the law, as he had prior federal felony convictions for assaulting a federal law enforcement officer and narcotics trafficking.

Alfredo Rasco faced a maximum statutory penalty of ten (10) years imprisonment for the Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud conviction; two (2) years imprisonment for his conviction of Aggravated Identity Theft, consecutive to his sentence on Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud; fines up to \$500,000; and three (3) years of supervised release. Niurka Rasco faced a maximum statutory penalty of up to six (6) months imprisonment; a fine up to \$2,000; and one (1) year of supervised release.

The Court further ordered Defendants Alfredo Rasco and Niurka Rasco to forfeit \$1.3 million in U.S. currency and a 42' yacht known as the "Thank You, God," that were seized by investigators during the investigation of this case. In total, government agents were able to recover approximately \$2 million of the \$4 million stolen from Medicare.

Tarver praised the hard work and dedication of Special Agents Mark A. Alig and Joshua Hayes of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, along with Special Agent David Graupner of the Office of Inspector General for HHS, who lead the investigation of this case. Tarver noted that the indictment against these defendants arose out of Operation Redex Infuscam, a major investigation led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Office of Health and Human Services (HHS) into fraudulent infusion billings to Medicare in and around the Southern District of Georgia.

Assistant United States Attorneys Brian T. Rafferty, James D. Durham, and R. Brian Tanner prosecuted this case on behalf of the United States.