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UNITED STATES INTERVENES IN CIVIL CASE AGAINST MEHMOOD PATEL, M.D.

The Civil Lawsuit Seeks Treble Damages and Penalties for False Claims to the U.S. Government

LAFAYETTE, La. - The United States has intervened in a civil lawsuit seeking treble damages and penalties from Dr. Mehmood Patel, a Lafayette, Louisiana interventional cardiologist, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today. The lawsuit accuses Dr. Patel of performing and billing Medicare for medically unnecessary cardiovascular procedures.

The suit was originally filed in the U. S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana by cardiologist Christopher Mallavarapu under the *qui tam* provisions of the False Claims Act. Under the federal statute, a private party, known as a “relator,” can file an action on behalf of the United States and receive a portion of the recovery ranging from 15-25% of the monetary damages recovered through the lawsuit. Under the False Claims Act, the United States may recover three times the amount of its losses plus civil penalties. Civil penalties range from \$5,500 to \$11,000 for *each* false claim submitted to the government agency for payment.

The Government’s intervention follows Dr. Patel’s criminal conviction of 51 counts of healthcare fraud in connection with claims that he performed medically unnecessary procedures such as cardiac angiograms, angioplasties, and stents. Patel was sentenced to 10 years in prison, and has filed an appeal.

(More)

The Government's civil complaint also alleges that Patel performed unnecessary right and left heart catheterizations. Medicare does not pay for procedures that are medically unnecessary. Another defendant in the lawsuit is Acadiana Cardiovascular Center, LLC, a cardiac catheterization lab owned and operated by Dr. Patel.

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