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# **News Release**

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## **Two Blaine women sentenced for health care fraud**

Two Blaine women were recently sentenced in federal court each to one count of health care fraud in a scheme to defraud several health care benefit programs out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

On Oct. 6 in St. Paul, United States District Court Judge Patrick Schiltz sentenced Chyree L. Hutchinson, 59, and Donna A. Ruch, 58, each to 18 months in prison, three years supervised release, and ordered both to pay a joint restitution of \$250,548.58. Ruch was charged April 23, and Hutchinson was charged April 9. Both women pleaded guilty in July.

According to their respective plea agreements, from March 2003 to March 2007 the two women executed a scheme to defraud several health insurance providers using their Coon Rapids business, Alternative Counseling Clinic, also known as Healthcare Reimbursement Consultants, by submitting false claims to the insurers for payment of counseling services, which resulted in the business receiving fraudulent payments of more than \$200,000.

Both Hutchinson and Ruch admitted that the insurance claims were false because they billed for services not provided to the patient named, misrepresented the services that were provided and billed for services that were not provided by the clinicians whose names were used on the invoices.

This case was the result of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Minnesota State Attorney General's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert M. Lewis.