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**CHIROPRACTOR SENTENCED TO 70 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR
DEFRAUDING WORKERS COMP AND OTHER INSURERS OF \$1.4 MILLION**

CHICAGO — A chiropractor who owned and operated a clinic in Maywood for more than a decade was sentenced today to 70 months in federal prison after pleading guilty last year to healthcare fraud. The defendant, **Darwin Minnis**, admitted that he and others submitted false claims to obtain payments from workers' compensation and other insurers for services that were not provided and inflated claims for services that were provided, which resulted in an intended loss of at least \$3 million and an actual loss of more than \$1.4 million.

Minnis, 56, who is in federal custody and formerly of West Chicago, was also ordered to pay restitution totaling \$1,450,202 by U.S. District Judge John Grady, who imposed the sentence in Federal Court.

From at least 2000 through June 2009, Minnis owned the Spine and Joint Rehabilitation Center, where most of the patients were U.S. Postal Service employees who were eligible for benefits from the U.S. Labor Department's Office of Workers' Compensation Program. Three medical doctors also worked at the clinic at various times.

Minnis, at least one doctor, a billing employee and others illegally submitted false and inflated claims to obtain workers compensation payments for the clinic and patients from the Labor Department, as well as private health insurers, for various services related to patients' work-related injuries, including medical, diagnostic, and physical therapy services. Minnis forged doctors' signatures on documents supporting the false claims, misrepresenting that services, treatment, physical therapy and/or testing had been provided, ordered or supervised by medical doctors. Minnis knew that Workers' Comp would not accept a chiropractor's opinions or reports as medical evidence to support patients' claims. Under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, chiropractors were not qualified physicians and their opinions did not constitute medical evidence except in very limited cases involving specific spine problems.

Minnis, the physician and the billing employee were indicted together in March 2010. Minnis pleaded guilty last November. The other two defendants have also pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

The sentence was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; L. Scott Caspall, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Great Lakes Field Office of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General; James Vanderberg, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Region of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General; and Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline Stern.

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