



**United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Minnesota**

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# **News Release**

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## **U.S. Attorney Announces Formation of Civil Frauds Unit**

Earlier today, B. Todd Jones, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, announced the formation of a Civil Frauds Unit in the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office. The work of the Unit will complement the fraud prosecutions handled by the Office's Criminal Division.

In making today's announcement, Jones said, "Fraudsters can be found in almost every community in the country. No area is immune from these people, who prey on the trust or vulnerabilities of others. Over the past several years, the U.S. Attorney's Office has prosecuted a number of such individuals and will continue to do so. It is our hope that this new Civil Frauds Unit, where combating fraud will be the focus each and every day, will enhance our efforts."

The Civil Frauds Unit will combat financial fraud, including health care fraud, mortgage fraud, pharmaceutical fraud, bank fraud, government procurement fraud, and federal grant fraud by pursuing investigations and civil enforcement actions in federal court. In addition, the Unit will work closely with the Criminal Division to halt on-going criminal fraud and freeze assets even before indictments are filed, pursuant to the Anti-Fraud Injunction Act. Moreover, the Unit will collaborate with the Civil Division's Asset Forfeiture Unit to freeze and seize money in pending criminal fraud cases for use as restitution to victims.

The federal government has a broad range of civil enforcement remedies under federal anti-fraud laws, including civil monetary penalties, treble damages, and equitable and injunctive relief. These remedies are not available in most criminal actions. In addition, civil litigation requires a lower burden of proof and can result in higher damages awarded than in criminal cases. As a result, coordinating civil and criminal fraud enforcement will help to ensure that justice is truly achieved for victims of fraud.

While the new Civil Frauds Unit will improve fraud litigation through better coordination of efforts and resources, the U.S. Attorney's Office has a long history of obtaining monetary recoveries in fraud cases by utilizing civil enforcement actions. Since 1996, when the national Affirmative Civil Enforcement program was initiated under then-Attorney General Janet Reno, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota has recovered over \$139 million. Recoveries were obtained in a wide variety of fraud cases, from those concerning federal crop insurance to those involving the federal Medicare and Medicaid programs.

If you have questions about the new Civil Frauds Unit in the District of Minnesota, please contact Assistant United States Attorney Jerry D. Wilhelm. He may be reached by calling the U.S. Attorney's Office, at (612) 664-5600.

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