



Department of Justice

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London Cardiologist Sentenced to 42 Months for Health Care Fraud

LONDON, Ky. – Yesterday, London physician Dr. Anis Chalhoub was sentenced, by U.S. District Court Judge Gregory F. Van Tatenhove, to serve 42 months in federal prison for health care fraud. In April 2018, a federal jury returned a guilty verdict, after hearing evidence that Dr. Chalhoub defrauded Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurers by implanting medically unnecessary pacemakers in his patients, and causing the unnecessary procedures and follow-up care to be billed to health insurance programs.

Between 2007 and 2011, Dr. Chalhoub implanted approximately 234 pacemakers in patients at St. Joseph London hospital. The evidence at trial showed that dozens of those patients' pacemakers were medically unnecessary, under well-established national guidelines and Medicare coverage rules. A number of patients testified at trial that Dr. Chalhoub pressured them into getting the procedures and told them misleading information about their health conditions. For instance, several patients recalled Dr. Chalhoub telling them that they might die without a pacemaker. Sinus node dysfunction, the diagnosis Dr. Chalhoub gave the patients, is a non-fatal condition. The jury also heard evidence that Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurers suffered hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses from Dr. Chalhoub's unnecessary procedures.

“The evidence established that the defendant violated his medical oath and placed greed over patient care,” said United States Attorney Robert M. Duncan, Jr. “The defendant performed unnecessary medical procedures and needlessly put lives at risk so that he could submit false claims seeking reimbursement for the unnecessary medical procedures. Our Office, in conjunction with our law enforcement partners, will continue to aggressively pursue medical professionals who are willing to so callously risk the health and safety of others.”

“This doctor violated his oath to do no harm,” said Derrick L. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General in Atlanta. “His reckless behavior has earned him jail time for surgically implanting pacemakers that patients did not need in order to fatten his pocket.”

In addition to his term of imprisonment, Dr. Chalhoub must pay a \$50,000 fine and must also repay \$257,515 to Medicare, Medicaid, and other private insurers who were financial victims of his scheme. After Dr. Chalhoub is released from prison, he will be supervised by the U.S. Probation Office for three years, and the court has prohibited him from practicing cardiology during that time.

United States Attorney Duncan; Derrick L. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Atlanta Division; and Michael A. Christman, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Louisville Division, jointly announced the sentence.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Assistant United States Attorneys Andrew E. Smith and Paul C. McCaffrey represented the United States in the case.

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