



U. S. Department of Justice

Jason R. Coody
Acting United States Attorney
Northern District of Florida

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United States Attorney's Office
Northern District of Florida
(850) 216-3845
USAFLN.Press.Office@usdoj.gov
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**FLORIDA COUNSELING CENTER OWNER AND PROVIDER SENTENCED TO
FEDERAL PRISON FOR MEDICAID FRAUD, CONSPIRACY, FALSE STATEMENTS,
AND IDENTITY THEFT**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Jason R. Coody, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida announced the sentencing of Stephanie Lynn Fleming, 43, and Helen Elizabeth Storey, 39, both of Waldorf, Maryland, and both formerly of Tallahassee, Florida. Fleming was sentenced to a total of three years and one day in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Storey was sentenced to a total of two years and one day in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Both defendants were ordered to pay \$219,000 in restitution to the Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA).

Fleming's and Storey's sentences were the result of a 3-day federal bench trial resulting in guilty verdicts for most counts on April 6, 2021. Both defendants were found guilty of health care fraud conspiracy, health care fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Fleming was also found guilty of making false statements in connection with health care matters.

"The sentences demonstrates that the United States Attorney's Office is committed to aggressively and diligently prosecuting those who commit healthcare fraud," said Acting U.S. Attorney Coody. "The concerted and cooperative effort of our federal and state law enforcement partners were critical to bringing these defendants to justice. We will continue to work toward our common goals of protecting our community members and preserving the integrity of our federally-funded healthcare programs."

Storey owned and operated North Florida Mental Health (NFMH), a Tallahassee-based counseling center, and employed Fleming as a licensed mental health counselor. Evidence presented in court proved that between April 15, 2016 and December 31, 2017, Storey and Fleming improperly obtained, or attempted to obtain, more than \$250,000 from Florida Medicaid by submitting fraudulent claims through NFMH.

"Convicted criminals Storey and Fleming fraudulently billed the Medicaid program, ignoring an exclusion from all federal health care programs while committing identity theft to boost their profits. They stole from this taxpayer-funded safety net program that is designed to provide health services to vulnerable patients," said Special Agent in Charge Omar Pérez Aybar. "These

convictions should send a warning to others tempted to loot from federal health care programs: our agents will investigate such bad actors and hold them accountable.”

Fleming, who provided psychotherapy, psychiatric diagnostic evaluations, and therapeutic behavioral services to patients of NFMH, agreed to a five-year debarment from participating in any state Medicaid program as a result of a 2016 felony conviction involving Medicaid fraud in the state of New Jersey. Evidence presented in court proved that Fleming falsely claimed on an application to become a Florida Medicaid provider that she had not been convicted of, or pled guilty or no contest to, a felony. Additional evidence demonstrated that Storey knew of Fleming’s conviction and debarment, and that Fleming was therefore ineligible to participate as a Florida Medicaid provider.

At trial, evidence showed that Fleming caused to be submitted – and that Storey submitted – multiple fraudulent Medicare claims by means of aggravated identity theft. In doing so, some of the false Medicare claims reflected that another eligible and licensed NFMH therapist performed services that, in reality, were provided by Fleming during the period of time that she was under debarment from participation in any state Medicaid program. The court heard evidence of additional instances in which the names and personal identification information of NFMH patients, many of whom were children, were used to submit fictitious Medicare claims for services that were not performed at all.

Assistant United States Attorney Justin M. Keen prosecuted the case, which was jointly investigated by the Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Inspector General and the Florida Attorney General Office’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](http://www.usdoj.gov/ndia/) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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