



Area man and woman face charges of defrauding Illinois Medicaid Home Services program

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
June 29 2018 11:02 AM

EAST ST. LOUIS - A Granite City man and Highland woman have been charged with defrauding the Illinois Medicaid Home Services program.

United States Attorney Donald S. Boyce announced today that a federal grand jury in East St. Louis, Illinois, has returned an indictment charging Elizabeth A. Schwarz, 55, of Highland, and Frank Coleman Stroehmer III, 62, of Granite City, with defrauding the Illinois Medicaid Home Services Program. The Southern District of Illinois Indictment is part of the largest healthcare fraud enforcement action in Department of Justice history.

The indictment comes as part of a larger coordinated effort led by the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to combat health care fraud nationwide.

According to the Southern District indictment, Schwarz was a beneficiary of the Illinois Home Services Program funded by Medicaid, and Stroehmer was one of her personal assistants in the same program. The pair were charged with felony health care fraud for claiming and receiving payments for services (hourly wages for supporting activities of daily living) that were never performed.

Schwarz and Stroehmer are scheduled to be arraigned on July 9, 2018, at the federal courthouse in East St. Louis, Illinois. Under federal law, each count of health care fraud is punishable by as much as ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The case against Schwarz and Stroehmer is being investigated by HHS-OIG agents and the Illinois State Police Medicaid Fraud Control Bureau. The case is being prosecuted by the Assistant United States Attorney Michael J. Quinley.

Earlier today, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and HHS Secretary Alex M. Azar III announced the largest ever health care fraud enforcement action by the Medicare Fraud Strike Force. The coordinated takedown was led by the Criminal Division, Fraud Section's Health Care Fraud Unit and resulted in charges against 601 defendants across 55 federal districts. The charges cover a wide variety of health care fraud schemes that together total more than \$2 billion in false billings.

An indictment is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, that charge is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.