

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. ATTORNEY BECK, ATTORNEY GENERAL STRANGE ANNOUNCE ARRESTS IN MEDICAID FRAUD CASE

(MONTGOMERY) – George L. Beck Jr., U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Alabama, and Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange announced the arrests of two individuals on charges that they defrauded the Alabama Medicaid Agency by billing for counseling services that were never provided.

Catrina R. Copeland, 43, of Dothan, is the owner of The Counseling Place, a Dothan company that contracted with the Medicaid Agency to provide counseling services to at-risk youth. Stephanie Govan, 41, a resident of Glenwood, was employed by Copeland as a therapist. Both were arrested on June 21 by Agents of the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Inspector General.

The investigation was initiated by a referral to the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit from the Alabama Medicaid Agency's Program Integrity Division, after Copeland failed to provide supporting documentation during a routine audit of the claims that she had submitted for payment. The results of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit's investigation were presented to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Copeland and Govan were indicted* by a federal grand jury in April, and each was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud. The indictment charges that Copeland and Govan caused claims to be filed with the Alabama Medicaid Agency for counseling services that never took place. If convicted, each faces a sentence of up to 10 years imprisonment.

"Those who choose to commit health care fraud do so at the expense of the most vulnerable of our society who are dependent upon these programs," said Attorney General Strange. "Protecting taxpayer resources is a high priority of my office and I am pleased to join U.S. Attorney George Beck in targeting costly Medicaid fraud."

Attorney General Strange thanked the staff of the Medicaid Agency's Program Integrity Division for its diligence in discovering the fraud. He also commended the staff of his Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for its thorough investigation and cooperative efforts with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Office of Inspector General in the investigation and indictment of those who steal resources meant for Alabama's most vulnerable citizens.

**An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*



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