



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Pinellas Doctor Pleads Guilty To Receiving Kickbacks For Writing Prescriptions For Compounded Medications

Tampa, Florida – Dr. Anthony Baldizzi (54, Largo) today pleaded guilty to conspiracy and receiving illegal kickbacks related to a federal health care benefit program. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison. A sentencing date has not yet been set.

According to the plea agreement, Baldizzi, a medical doctor practicing in Pinellas County, wrote prescriptions for compounded creams for scars and pain, among other things. These creams, which were prescribed to TRICARE beneficiaries and others, cost between \$900 and \$21,000 for a one-month supply.

Beginning in May 2014, Baldizzi entered into an agreement with the owners of Lifecare Pharmacy, a Pinellas County-based compounding pharmacy, and the principals of Centurion Compounding, Inc., a Pasco County-based marketing firm that promoted compounded creams. Lifecare and Centurion agreed to pay Baldizzi 10 percent of each paid claim resulting from a prescription for a compounded cream written for his patients and filled at Lifecare. These prescriptions were often billed to TRICARE.

Also, at the request of Centurion's owners, Baldizzi conducted "pop up" medical clinics at a hotel, retail store, and other locations in order to see high volumes of Centurion-recruited patients and prescribe Centurion-promoted compounded creams, many of which were paid for by TRICARE.

Lifecare received approximately \$5.3 million from TRICARE for claims made for prescriptions for compounded medications prescribed by Baldizzi as a result of this illegal kickback scheme. The conspirators made cash payments to Baldizzi and bought him a \$72,000 luxury car in return for writing the prescriptions for compounded creams for individuals covered by federal health care benefit programs.

Baldizzi's co-conspirators, pharmacists Carlos Mazariegos and Benjamin Nundy, who owned and operated Lifecare Pharmacy, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud in related cases and are set to be sentenced in June 2018. This investigation is ongoing.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mandy Riedel and Megan Kistler.

Attachment(s):

[Download Plea Agreement](#)

Topic(s):

Prescription Drugs

Financial Fraud

Health Care Fraud

Component(s):

[USAO - Florida, Middle](#)

Updated March 8, 2018