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Department of Justice

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District of Hawaii

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oahu Physical Therapist Sentenced To 42 Months For Mult-Million Dollar Health Care Fraud Scheme

HONOLULU – Garrett Okubo, 52, of Honolulu, Hawaii, was sentenced today to 42 months of imprisonment for committing health care fraud. As part of his sentence, Okubo must pay \$3.7 million in restitution, \$3.7 million in forfeiture, and must serve three years of supervised release.

According to court documents and information presented in court, from January 2011 through October 2017, Okubo submitted millions of dollars of false claims for payment for physical therapy services to TRICARE, Medicare, Medicaid, and HMSA. Moreover, Okubo falsely claimed he had personally provided physical therapy services to his patients, when in reality his staff members, who were not licensed, provided said services. Okubo was often not physically present in his clinic while his patients received treatment, and was instead available only by phone. Okubo inflated the amount of time that his patients were treated, by “rounding up” to the maximum amount of time that the health care benefit plan would pay for a single patient visit, even if a patient were seen for far less time. Nearly 70% of Okubo’s total billings over six years were fraudulent.

At sentencing, Chief U.S. District Judge J. Michael Seabright highlighted the importance of deterring others from committing similar crimes, and remarked that Okubo “knew exactly what he was doing.”

“Our dedicated law enforcement community will continue to pursue individuals like Mr. Okubo, whose fraudulent conduct drains money from public coffers,” stated U.S. Attorney for the District of Hawaii Kenji M. Price. “Fraud in the healthcare industry erodes the finite resources available to fund treatment for ailing patients, and we will continue to do our part as a law enforcement community to protect those resources by exposing misconduct and holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes.”

The case was jointly investigated by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General; and the State of Hawaii, Department of the Attorney General, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit; and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc A. Wallenstein.

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Topic(s):

Health Care Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Hawaii

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