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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Owners Of Pasco County Marketing Firm Plead Guilty For Conspiring To Pay Healthcare Kickbacks

Tampa, Florida – Frank Monte (40, Valrico) and Kimberley Anderson (52, New Port Richey) today pleaded guilty to conspiracy to pay healthcare kickbacks. Each faces up to five years in federal prison and each has also agreed to forfeit \$1,717,925.50 in assets.

According to the plea agreement, in May 2014, Monte and Anderson, acting on behalf of their marketing company Centurion Compounding, Inc., entered into a marketing agreement with the owners of a Pinellas County-based pharmacy called Lifecare. Centurion employed sales representatives to market compounded medications, specifically creams for pain and scars, among others, to beneficiaries of healthcare plans, especially TRICARE. These creams typically ranged in price from \$900 to \$21,000 for a one-month supply. Between June and November 2014, Monte, Anderson, the owners of LifeCare pharmacy (Carlos Mazariegos and Benjamin Nundy), and a Pinellas-based physician (Dr. Anthony Baldizzi), agreed that, in exchange for paying kickbacks to Baldizzi equal to 10% of the after-cost amount of each claim paid by TRICARE or other health care benefit programs, Baldizzi would write prescriptions for compounded medications filled by LifeCare for Centurion-recruited patients. Mazariegos, acting on behalf of the conspirators, made cash payments and provided other things of value to Baldizzi as kickbacks, including a new BMW M3.

During the conspiracy, Baldizzi wrote prescriptions for compounded creams and the conspirators caused the submission of claims for these creams to TRICARE, which resulted in TRICARE paying LifeCare more than \$4.4 million. The profit to LifeCare for these creams was approximately \$4 million. A substantial portion of these claims resulted from TRICARE patients recruited by Centurion. Pursuant to the agreement of the parties, LifeCare received 45% of the profits, Centurion expected to receive 45% of the profits, and Baldizzi was promised 10% of the profits.

Using the profits from the conspiracy, Monte and Anderson purchased real property and luxury automobiles. The following items were seized and forfeited: \$8,730.50 in cash; a 2009 Bentley Continental; a 2012 Lamborghini Aventador; a 2012 Itasca motorhome, a 2011 Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG; a 2014 Maserati; a 2005 Ford GT; a 2012 Fisker Karma; real property in Land O Lakes; a 2010 Ferrari California; a 2013 McLaren 12C Spider; a 2012 Porsche Panamera; and real property in Plant City.

Separately charged co-conspirators Carlos Mazariegos and Benjamin Nundy previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit health care fraud. Anthony Baldizzi previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud and receiving healthcare kickbacks. Mazariegos, Nundy, and Baldizzi are scheduled to be sentenced in November and December 2019.

The guilty pleas of Monte and Anderson conclude a multi-agency investigation that lasted more than five years, resulting in the successful prosecution of 10 defendants. As a result of this investigation, TRICARE claims totaling more than \$58 million have been repaid or reversed, and an additional \$6 million has been repaid to TRICARE by the conspirators.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, the Defense Investigative Service, the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, and U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mandy Riedel, Colin McDonell, and Suzanne Nebesky.

Attachment(s):

[Download Anderson Plea Agreement](#)

[Download Monte Plea Agreement](#)

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Health Care Fraud

Component(s):

[USAO - Florida, Middle](#)

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