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SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* MISSISSIPPI

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Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Mississippi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 12, 2021

## Columbia Woman Pleads Guilty to Health Care Fraud

Hattiesburg, Miss. – A Columbia, Mississippi woman pled guilty in U.S. District Court to one count of health care fraud.

According to court documents, beginning in 2016 and continuing for well over two years, Joy Beth Harden, 51, executed a scheme to defraud Medicare and other health care benefit programs. Specifically, Harden submitted fraudulent bills for durable medical equipment on behalf of her business, BZB LLC doing business as Duracare Home Medical Equipment in the Hattiesburg area. As a result, Medicare and other benefits programs paid Harden for durable medical equipment that was never prescribed for patients and for medical equipment that was never delivered to the patients.

Harden pled guilty on Tuesday, August 10, 2021. She will be sentenced on November 23, 2021, and faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. A federal district judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. Harden remains in federal custody awaiting sentencing.

The announcement was made by Acting U.S. Attorney Darren J. LaMarca, Acting Special Agent in Charge Paul W. Brown of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Mississippi, Special Agent in Charge Derrick L. Jackson of U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG) Atlanta Regional Office, Special Agent in Charge Cynthia A. Bruce of the DoD OIG, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) Southeast Field Office, and Inspector General Martin J. Dickman of U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Inspector General (RRB OIG).

The case was prosecuted by Deputy Criminal Chief Dave Fulcher.

**Topic(s):**  
[Health Care Fraud](#)

**Component(s):**  
[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)  
[USAO - Mississippi, Southern](#)

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