

PRESS RELEASE

Philadelphia Man Sentenced to 15 Months in Prison for Role in Healthcare Fraud Conspiracy Targeting New Jersey Health Benefits Programs

Thursday, September 7, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

CAMDEN, N.J. – A Philadelphia man was sentenced today to 15 months in prison for his role in defrauding New Jersey state health benefits programs and other insurers out of \$2.69 million by submitting fraudulent claims for medically unnecessary prescriptions, Attorney for the United States Vikas Khanna announced.

Robert Bessey, 49, of Philadelphia, previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler to an information charging him with conspiracy to commit health care fraud. Judge Kugler imposed the sentence today in Camden federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

From January 2015 through April 2016, Bessey, a recruiter in the conspiracy, and others persuaded individuals in New Jersey to obtain very expensive and medically unnecessary compounded medications from an out-of-state pharmacy. The conspirators learned that a pharmacy benefits administrator would reimburse pharmacies thousands of dollars for a one-month supply of certain prescription compounded medications, including pain, scar, antifungal, and libido creams, as well as over \$10,000 per month for certain vitamin combinations.

The pharmacy benefits administrator managed the prescription drug benefit plan for some New Jersey state and local government and education employees, including teachers, firefighters, municipal police officers, and state troopers. The conspirators

recruited public employees and other individuals covered by the pharmacy benefits administrator to fraudulently obtain compounded medications from the compounding pharmacy without any evaluation by a medical professional that they were medically necessary.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Kugler sentenced Bessey to two years of supervised release. Bessey was ordered to forfeit \$485,540 and pay restitution of \$2.69 million.

Attorney for the United States Khanna credited special agents of the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy in Newark; special agents of IRS – Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Tammy Tomlins in Newark; and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, New York Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone, with the investigation leading to the sentencing.

The government is represented by R. David Walk Jr., Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Friedman of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Topic

HEALTH CARE FRAUD

Component

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