

PRESS RELEASE

Pain Doctors Plead Guilty In \$45 Million Healthcare Fraud

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Texas

Two pain management doctors who pantomimed injections on patients pleaded guilty today to healthcare fraud charges, announced U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas Leigha Simonton.

Drs. Desi Barroga, 51, and Deno Barroga, 51, were [indicted](#) in November 2023. The pair pleaded guilty Tuesday to one count each of conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud before U.S. Magistrate Judge Rebecca Rutherford.

According to court documents, the twin brothers admitted that they conspired to defraud Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, and United Healthcare by submitting claims for corticosteroid injections that were never administered.

As part of the conspiracy, the Barrogas required patients to submit to monthly office visits. This allowed patients to continue receiving highly addictive Schedule II controlled substances – including hydrocodone, oxycodone, and morphine – while allowing the defendants to bill patients' insurance companies for expensive services they never provided.

The Barrogas reported to insurance that they performed as many as 80 corticosteroid injections per patient per visit. In reality, the majority of these injections were never administered. In many instances, the doctor simply placed a needle on the patient's body without actually piercing the skin to mimic giving an injection.

The defendants created fake medical records, which were often cut and pasted, or cloned, from patient to patient with little to no variation. They also instructed patients to include false statements pertaining to the injections and other treatments in the record.

In plea papers, the brothers admitted that they billed insurers at least \$45 million and were paid at least \$9 million as part of the scheme.

They now face up to 10 years each in federal prison.

Under the terms of their plea agreement, both men agreed to immediately surrender their DEA registrations and to forfeit their medical licenses at least 14 days prior to sentencing. They also agreed to joint and several restitution in an amount to be determined at a later date by the court.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Inspector General, the U.S Department of Labor’s Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S Office of Personnel Management’s Office of the Inspector General, the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Dallas Field Division Diversion Group, and the Texas Department of Insurance – Fraud Unit – Austin and Fort Worth Field Offices conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Renee Hunter is prosecuting the case.

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Updated May 21, 2024

Topic

HEALTH CARE FRAUD

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