

Department of Justice

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BATON ROUGE DOCTOR SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS RELATING TO HEALTH CARE MATTERS

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney Brandon J. Fremin announced that U.S. District Judge Brian A. Jackson sentenced Marvin Clifton, M.D., age 71, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to 18 months in federal prison following his conviction for making false statements relating to health care matters. The Court further sentenced Dr. Clifton to two years of supervised release following his term of imprisonment, and ordered him to pay a \$50,000 fine and a \$100 special assessment.

According to admissions made as part of Dr. Clifton’s guilty plea, Dr. Clifton was a licensed physician whose medical practice included physical therapy. His patients included individuals that received medical benefits under the Office of Workers’ Compensation Program (“Workers’ Comp Program”). The Workers’ Comp Program was a federal health care benefit program, providing wage replacement benefits, medical treatment, vocational rehabilitation, and other benefits to certain workers or their dependents who experienced work-related injuries or occupational disease. Qualified medical treatment provided under the Workers’ Comp Program was paid for by the U.S. Treasury.

Between January 2015 and January 2019, Dr. Clifton engaged in a scheme to obtain money from the Workers’ Comp Program to which he was not entitled, by knowingly and willfully falsifying and concealing material facts. Dr. Clifton directed his office managers to falsify medical bills which claimed that Dr. Clifton had provided medical treatment such as physical therapy to Workers’ Comp patients, when he had not in fact provided the services. In some instances, Dr. Clifton would direct his office managers to bill for treatment on days his office was closed, and on other occasions, Dr. Clifton directed his office managers to bill for longer treatment sessions than what had actually been provided. These falsified medical bills were then sent to the United States Department of Labor at Dr. Clifton’s direction.

Throughout the course of this scheme, and through numerous transactions, Dr. Clifton submitted over \$500,000 of falsified bills, through which he obtained approximately \$340,342.58 in federal funds from the United States Department of Labor to which he was not entitled.

U.S. Attorney Brandon J. Fremin stated, “This office will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute those who commit healthcare fraud. Cheating the federal Workers’ Compensation Program is not a victimless crime, as it jeopardizes healthcare resources and steals taxpayer money meant to treat federal workers with real injuries and illnesses.”

Bryan A. Vorndran, FBI New Orleans Special Agent in Charge stated: "Dr. Clifton compromised his integrity and medical license to line his pockets with the proceeds of false federal Workers’ Compensation claims made in collaboration with nine U.S. Postal employees. I commend the great work performed by the men and women of the FBI Baton Rouge Resident Agency, the U.S. Postal Service – Office of Inspector General, the Department of Labor, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Middle District of Louisiana, to hold those accountable who attempt to defraud American taxpayers through an intricate health care fraud scheme.”

“The sentence obtained today has been the culmination of a thorough investigation completed by our agents revealing abuse by medical professionals of Federal benefits programs for personal gain,” said Special Agent in Charge Christopher Cave, of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General Southern Area Field Office. “The USPS-OIG, along with our law enforcement partners, will continue to vigorously investigate these types of cases in order to deter and stop these fraud schemes.”

“Dr. Clifton fraudulently submitted more than \$500,000 in false claims to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (“OWCP”), putting his greed above patient care. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners and OWCP to protect the integrity of DOL’s benefit programs,” said Steven Grell, Special Agent-in-Charge, Dallas Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

This matter was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Peter J. Smyczek.
