

PRESS RELEASE

Cincinnati healthcare staffing company agrees to pay \$9.25 million to resolve visa fraud investigations

Monday, March 25, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Ohio

Company also pledges \$8 million to improve healthcare access

CINCINNATI – A Cincinnati-based healthcare staffing company has agreed to pay \$9.25 million and to pledge an additional \$8 million for related healthcare projects to resolve civil and criminal investigations into the company's visa sponsorship program.

Health Carousel, LLC, is a privately held healthcare staffing company that offers workforce placements for healthcare professionals. Health Carousel recruits healthcare professionals including nurses and physical therapists who are foreign nationals to come to the United States to work through Passport USA, and the staffing company sponsors the individuals' visa applications.

The global resolution resolves criminal fraud and civil False Claims Act allegations that Health Carousel submitted false visa immigrant applications and caused false statements to be made to government officials while recruiting nurses, physical therapists and other healthcare professionals to the United States. The allegations included that Health Carousel provided fraudulent job placement letters so that visas would be approved more quickly, even though individuals had not yet been placed with a specific health care facility.

As part of reaching a global resolution, the company has performed extensive remedial measures to address compliance gaps and pledged an additional \$8 million to address harm caused by its prior practices.

This pledged commitment will be distributed to various non-governmental and non-profit organizations including:

- \$3 million to promote the sustainability, development and ethical recruitment of healthcare professionals;
- \$3 million to strengthen healthcare access and infrastructure in developing countries where Health Carousel recruits healthcare professionals;
- \$750,000 to promote healthcare access in the United States for rural and underserved communities;
- \$750,000 to support immigrant communities in the United States; and
- \$500,000 to support public health projects in Central and Southern Ohio.

“The U.S. Attorney’s Office will ensure that companies that attempt to skirt immigration laws will be appropriately addressed,” said U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Parker. “Through these agreements, we ensure the financial accountability that Health Carousel faces will resolve both civil and criminal allegations and will improve healthcare access in underserved communities here in Ohio and across the United States, as well as in developing countries where Health Carousel operates.”

“It is essential for companies to follow the rules when it comes to recruiting workers to the United States,” said Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Detroit acting Special Agent in Charge Shawn Gibson. “Given the inherent risks associated with working in the medical field, we need to ensure that there are no shortcuts, and everyone is held accountable under the law.”

This matter was investigated by agents from Homeland Security Investigations and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, as well as the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Department of State, National Visa Center, Fraud Prevention Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Matthew Horwitz and Ebunoluwa Taiwo are representing the United States in these matters.

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