

PRESS RELEASE

# Court Enjoins Fraudulent Medical Debt Collection Scheme Targeting Veterans and Older Americans

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## For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department announced today that, as of Aug. 2, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma has entered permanent injunctions that bar three Tulsa, Oklahoma-area men and two companies from running a fraudulent medical debt collection scheme that targeted current and former servicemembers and older Americans.

In its civil complaint, the United States alleged that Christopher Parks, 63, Christopher Noah Parks, 31, and Stephen Miller, 39, sent thousands of fraudulent debt collection notices on Assured Collections LLC and Assured Financial LLC letterhead to consumers nationwide. The letters demanded thousands of dollars in payment purportedly for medical devices that some consumers received for past medical procedures, such as leg compression devices used to prevent blood clots after surgery. The United States alleged that defendants had no authority to collect any debt from those consumers and that the debts for which defendants sought repayment were in many cases illusory — i.e., consumers did not actually owe the money, but many paid it anyway. The complaint further alleged that Christopher Parks and his co-defendants knew that the debt collection notices were fraudulent yet continued to harass consumers and demand payments.

According to court documents, Christopher Parks directed significant aspects of the scheme while spending time in prison on other healthcare fraud charges. For example, recorded telephone calls obtained from the facility where Parks had been incarcerated revealed that Parks directed Stephen Miller to switch names and operate under Assured Financial LLC instead of Assured Collections LLC after numerous consumers filed Better Business Bureau complaints accusing Assured Collections LLC of fraud.

Under the terms of their civil consent decrees, defendants agreed to be permanently enjoined from, among other things, engaging in any future billing and debt collection activities and accepting any future payments from any consumer who received a debt collection notice from Assured Collections LLC or Assured Financial LLC. Additionally, defendants agreed to disclose the consent decrees to any current, prospective and/or future employee, employer, business partner, client or associate engaged in the healthcare or debt collection industries.

"The department is committed to preventing vulnerable consumers from being harmed by false claims about debts they purportedly owe," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian M. Boynton, head of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "I am thankful for the tireless efforts of our investigative partners who were integral to our success in this case."

"Christopher Parks, a former attorney, devised a scheme to defraud Northern District of Oklahoma citizens of millions of dollars while he was in prison for a previous healthcare fraud scheme," said U.S. Attorney Clint Johnson for the Northern District of Oklahoma. "Defendants were brought to justice for their brazen scheme through a collaborative effort between the department and our investigative partners. My office will zealously pursue fraudsters who swindle citizens of their hard-earned money."

"Protecting the integrity of the healthcare system for our military members and their families is a top priority of the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General's Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS)," said Acting Special Agent in Charge Ryan Settle of the DCIS Southwest Field Office. "DCIS will continue to work with its law enforcement partners and the Justice Department to hold fraudsters accountable for their illicit activities and to ensure America's service members are not victimized."

"Preserving veterans' access to world-class health care is a priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (VA OIG), and we will investigate anyone who would seek to exploit VA's programs and services," said Special Agent in Charge Kris Raper with the VA OIG's South Central Field Office. "The VA OIG is grateful to the U.S. Attorney's Office, Justice Department's Consumer Protection Branch and our law enforcement partners for their efforts to achieve justice in this case."

In an unrelated [case](#) brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma, Christopher Parks was sentenced in October 2023 to 18 months in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to offer and pay health care kickbacks as part of a scheme where consumers were steered to obtain prescriptions from Parks-controlled compounding pharmacies. Parks is also currently awaiting trial in the Eastern District of

Texas on other federal criminal healthcare fraud charges stemming from his billing practices as the principal of a company called USA Medical.

The VA-OIG, DCIS, Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and FBI investigated the case.

Trial Attorney Wesline N. Manuelpillai and Assistant Director Patrick R. Runkle of the Civil Division's Consumer Protection Branch and Assistant U.S. Attorney Marianne Hardcastle for the Northern District of Oklahoma prosecuted the case.

If you or someone you know is age 60 or older and has experienced financial fraud, experienced professionals are standing by at the National Elder Fraud Hotline at 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311). This Justice Department hotline, managed by the Office for Victims of Crime, can provide personalized support to callers by assessing the needs of the victim and identifying relevant next steps. Case managers will identify appropriate reporting agencies, provide information to callers to assist them in reporting, connect callers directly with appropriate agencies and provide resources and referrals, on a case-by-case basis. Reporting is the first step. Reporting can help authorities identify those who commit fraud and reporting certain financial losses due to fraud as soon as possible can increase the likelihood of recovering losses. The hotline is open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET. English, Spanish and other languages are available.

More information about the department's efforts to help American seniors is available at its Elder Justice Initiative webpage. For more information about the Consumer Protection Branch and its enforcement efforts, visit [www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch](http://www.justice.gov/civil/consumer-protection-branch). Additional information about the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Oklahoma can be found at [www.justice.gov/usao-ndok](http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndok). Elder fraud complaints may be filed with the Federal Trade Commission at [www.reportfraud.ftc.gov/](http://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov/) or at 877-FTC-HELP. The Justice Department provides a variety of resources relating to elder fraud victimization through its Office for Victims of Crime, which can be reached at [www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov).

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## **Components**

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