

PRESS RELEASE

Four sentenced in \$110 million-dollar kickback conspiracy

Thursday, May 8, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

McALLEN, Texas – Multiple people have been sentenced for their roles in a conspiracy to pay kickbacks in exchange for prescription referrals, announced U.S. Attorney Nicholas J. Ganjei.

John Ageudo Rodriguez, 55, Mohammad Imtiaz Chowdhury, 44, and Hector de la Cruz Jr., 54, all of Edinburg, and Alex Flores Jr., 55, McAllen, had all previously pleaded guilty.

U.S. District Judge Randy Crane has now ordered Rodriguez to serve 60 months in federal prison. De La Cruz and Flores were sentenced to 46 months while Chowdhury received a 30-month-term of imprisonment. All must also serve three years of supervised release following completion of their sentences.

Rodriguez, a former licensed pharmacist, owned and operated Pharr Family Pharmacy. He conspired with several “marketers” – including Chowdhury, De La Cruz and Flores – to pay kickbacks to medical providers who referred prescriptions to his pharmacy. Rodriguez then billed various benefit programs, including the Department of Labor, TRICARE and Medicare, for millions of dollars in claims. From 2014 to 2016, his pharmacy submitted more than \$110 million in claims to federal health care programs for compound drugs.

“Illegal kickbacks are the engine that drives health care fraud,” said Ganjei. “Our office will aggressively pursue fraud, waste, and abuse that cost taxpayers millions, if not billions, every year.”

All were permitted to remain on bond and voluntarily surrender to a Federal Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

The U.S. Postal Service-Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Labor-OIG, FBI, Department of Defense-Defense Criminal Investigative Service, Department of Veteran Affairs-OIG, Department of Health and Human Services-OIG and Texas Health and Human Services-OIG conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Swartz prosecuted the case.

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HEALTH CARE FRAUD

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