

PRESS RELEASE

Physician and two pharmacists charged for \$170M fraud scheme

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

HOUSTON - A 13-count indictment was unsealed today charging two pharmacists and a physician for their roles in a multimillion-dollar health care fraud, kickback and money laundering scheme.

A federal grand jury in Houston returned the 13-count indictment Sept. 7, which was unsealed today.

According to court documents, Shalondria Simpson, 45, Houston, is a pharmacist who owned and operated two pharmacies in Houston: Advance Pharmacy and TruCare Pharmacy. Simpson's twin sister, physician Lashondria Simpson-Camp, 45, Allen, allegedly referred prescriptions to Advance and TruCare in exchange for illegal kickbacks and bribes. Shayla Bryant, 38, Houston, was a pharmacist and Advance and TruCare's business manager.

Between 2016 and 2022, Simpson, Simpson-Camp and Bryant allegedly conspired with others to submit false and fraudulent claims to the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Program (DOL-OWCP) for high reimbursing drugs that were often medically unnecessary and induced by kickbacks and bribes. DOL-OWCP administers workers' compensation benefits on behalf of the Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA),

Further, Simpson, Simpson-Camp, Bryant and others allegedly conspired to pay and receive these kickbacks. Simpson and Bryan allegedly paid illegal kickbacks and bribes, often through shell entities or in cash, directly to physicians like Simpson-Camp, a clinic owner, a medical assistant and other marketers. In total, Simpson's pharmacies allegedly submitted approximately \$170 million in fraudulent claims to FECA through DOL-OWCP.

To conceal the scheme and disguise its proceeds, Simpson also allegedly conspired to launder the proceeds of the criminal activity through financial transactions greater than \$10,000. According to the indictment, after learning of the investigation, Simpson attempted to cover her tracks by converting criminal proceeds to cash and transferring funds among over 10 bank accounts and a cryptocurrency wallet. She also allegedly solicited others' help in liquidating assets and concealing her ownership and control of those assets.

The indictment charges Simpson, Simpson-Camp and Bryant with one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States and pay and receive health care kickbacks and one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud. Simpson is also charged with five counts of paying health care kickbacks, one of which also charges Bryant. The indictment further charges Simpson with conspiracy to launder monetary instruments and five counts of money laundering. If convicted, Simpson, Simpson-Camp and Bryant each face a maximum penalty of five years in prison for conspiracy to defraud the United States and pay and receive health care kickbacks as well as 10 years in prison for conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud. Simpson and Bryant each face a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison for each count of paying health care kickbacks. Simpson faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison for conspiracy to launder money instruments and 10 years for each count of money laundering.

The U.S. Postal Service - Office of Inspector General (USPS-OIG), Department of Labor – OIG, FBI and Veterans Affairs – OIG conducted the investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brandon Fyffe and Trial Attorneys Devon Helfmeyer and Andrew Tamayo of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section are prosecuting the case.

The Fraud Section leads the Criminal Division's efforts to combat health care fraud through the Health Care Fraud Strike Force Program. Since March 2007, this program, comprised of 15 strike forces operating in 25 federal districts, has charged more than 5,000 defendants who collectively have billed federal health care programs and private insurers more than \$24 billion. In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, working in conjunction with the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services, are taking steps to hold providers accountable for their involvement in health care fraud schemes. More information can be found at www.justice.gov/criminal-fraud/health-care-fraud-unit.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. A defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted through due process of law.

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Topic

HEALTH CARE FRAUD

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