



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana**

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## **DALE, INDIANA MAN SENTENCED FOR HEALTH CARE FRAUD**

### PRESS RELEASE

Timothy M. Morrison, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, and Steve Carter, Indiana Attorney General, announced that WILLIAM HIGDON, 26, Dale, Indiana, was sentenced to 60 months imprisonment yesterday in Evansville by U.S. District Judge Richard L. Young following his guilty plea to Health Care Fraud. This case was the result of an investigation by the U.S. Health and Human Services Inspector General and the Indiana Attorney General Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

HIGDON was the primary owner and operator of Jasper Cab, LLC, doing business as Higdon Transportation, a cab and medical transportation company operating in the Jasper, Indiana area, since around 2004. Around July 2005, Higdon bought RTC, another medical transportation business in the Jasper area.

Indiana Medicaid, a health care benefit program, reimburses transportation companies for transporting Medicaid patients to and from their doctor and hospital visits. HIGDON billed approximately \$294,000 in services from 329 claims for about 64 patients, occurring primarily from December 2004 through February 2006. HIGDON knew these services were never provided.

HIGDON electronically entered the Medicaid system and billed Medicaid for transportation in order to receive additional payments for services never provided. Medicaid data shows that for the 329 fraudulent claims, typically after a legitimate claim was initially submitted — and usually paid within 7 to 10 days — HIGDON billed Medicaid for additional dates of service, often in extremely close proximity to those previously legitimately billed claims. These subsequent claims are invariably undocumented by the records described above; most importantly, there are no underlying claims from health care providers documenting that a health care appointment was the purpose of the transportation on those dates. In an interview with law enforcement authorities, HIGDON acknowledged submitting claims for medical transportation to

Medicaid without regard to whether the trips had been made or, if they had already been made, whether they had been already submitted and paid.

“The sentence from the Court sends a strong message that Medicaid fraud is a serious crime,” Indiana Attorney General Steve Carter said. “I applaud the collaborative work of the state and federal agencies for bringing justice in this case.”

“These cases are labor intensive and are successfully completed neither quickly nor easily,” added Acting U.S. Attorney Morrison. “The cooperation of multiple investigative agencies made this conviction possible.”

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Winfield D. Ong, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Young also imposed 3 years supervised release following HIGDON’s release from imprisonment. HIGDON was ordered to make restitution in the amount of \$294,000.

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