



Department of Justice

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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS MEDICAL SUPPLIER OF MEDICARE FRAUD

Atlanta, GA - The operator of a wheelchair supply business was convicted by a jury today in Federal District Court on eleven counts of having engaged in a Medicare fraud scheme. UDO UDO EKPO, JR., 64, of Stone Mountain, Georgia, billed the federal government through causing claims to be submitted for wheelchairs and wheelchair accessories that were not provided to Medicare patients.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said about the case, "Medicare depends to a large degree on the honesty and integrity of the participants in the program to provide medical supplies and services to among the neediest of our fellow citizens. Dishonest providers who cheat Medicare like Mr. Ekpo may find themselves in federal prison."

According to Nahmias and the evidence at trial: EKPO owned and operated "V&A Services" in Stone Mountain, Georgia, since 2001. While operating V&A Services, EKPO engaged in a scheme to have delivery tickets prepared which falsely stated that motorized wheelchairs had been provided to Medicare patients. Those delivery tickets and claim forms were used to submit false bills to Medicare and obtain payments for wheelchairs and wheelchair accessories that were never delivered to the Medicare patients. "Medicare Part B" is a voluntary insurance program available to citizens 65 years of age and older and to certain disabled people. The program covers wheelchairs and wheelchair accessories only when a physician has ordered the equipment based on the patient's medical needs. Medicare typically pays approximately \$4100 for a motorized wheelchair and additional amounts for wheelchair accessories.

The fraud loss involving the wheelchairs is estimated at approximately \$40,000. EKPO and his company also face potential forfeiture of a corporate bank account as well as wheelchairs and other medical equipment seized as part of the case. EKPO could also receive a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. A sentencing date for EKPO before United States District Judge Richard W. Story has not yet been set.

This case has been investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General (HHS-OIG) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Daniel A. Caldwell is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan .