



Department of Defense
Office of the Inspector General

Information Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Former Medical Equipment Supply Company Employee Pleads Guilty to
Health Care Fraud**

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that Christine Warren Rudolf, a former employee of Home Care Supply, Incorporated (Home Care), Norfolk, VA, pled guilty in the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk Division, to a criminal information charging her with a single count of health care fraud in violation of Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 1347.

Home Care, a nationwide supplier of durable medical equipment, employed Rudolf as a sales representative. In addition to her salary, Rudolf received bonuses and commissions that were based upon monthly sales and rentals of durable medical equipment.

An investigation confirmed that while a Home Care employee, Rudolf forged physicians' signatures and dates on Certificates of Medical Necessity, forged the signatures of physicians' medical assistants or other employees as the persons supplying patient information, and forged oximetry test results on Certificates of Medical Necessity to qualify patients for oxygen therapy. It was determined that Rudolf copied the signatures of physicians on Certificates of Medical Necessity. The fraudulent Certificates of Medical Necessity were ultimately submitted along with claims for payment to the TRICARE, Medicare, and Medicaid health care benefits programs as well as private insurance plans. In order to be reimbursed by these programs and private insurers, durable medical equipment suppliers, such as Home Care, must submit a Certificate of Medical Necessity signed by a physician attesting to the need for the equipment. As a result of Rudolf's scheme, the Federal health care programs and private insurers combined loss totaled \$84,084.

Rudolf faces a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$250,000. Rudolph's sentencing is scheduled for October 13, 2006.

The investigation was conducted jointly by the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (the criminal investigative arm of the DoD OIG), the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Investigations, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Anthony P. Giorno, United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division, prosecuted the case.

For further information, contact Joseph A. McMillan, Special Agent in Charge, Mid-Atlantic Field Office at (703) 604-8411.

To report suspected fraud, waste, and abuse within DoD programs, contact the Defense Hotline toll-free at (800) 424-9098, e-mail: hotline@dodig.mil/, or visit them on the World Wide Web at <http://www.dodig.mil/hotline/>.

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