



Department of Justice

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MABLETON PHYSICIAN PLEADS GUILTY TO MEDICARE FRAUD

Doctor Admits To Forgery

Atlanta, GA - A physician who operated a wheelchair supply business pleaded guilty today in Federal District Court to engaging in a Medicare fraud scheme that bilked the federal government of more than \$120,000. Dr. E. GOODMAN OBOT, also known as "Etiowo Archibong Obot," 45, of Lithonia, Georgia, has owned and operated Specialist Medical Supplies in Mableton, Georgia, since 2003. At today's plea hearing before District Judge Marvin Shoob, OBOT admitted to forging another physician's signature on wheelchair prescriptions and to submitting fraudulent claims to Medicare to obtain payments OBOT was not entitled to receive.

"Medicare, like most federal benefit programs, depends to a large degree on the honesty and integrity of the participants in the program, especially medical professionals," said David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. "Dishonest providers who cheat Medicare may find themselves inside a federal prison."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: In January 2006 a federal grand jury returned a 42-count indictment charging OBOT with submitting false claims to Medicare between August 2003 and November 2004. The indictment alleged that OBOT sought and received Medicare reimbursements for power wheelchairs and wheelchair accessories that patients did not need or that OBOT never delivered.

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 the patient's treating physician has ordered the equipment based on the patient's medical needs. Medicare typically pays about \$5,000 for a power wheelchair and additional amounts for accessories.

As part of a negotiated plea agreement, OBOT today admitted that Medicare overpaid him at least \$120,000 because of his fraudulent scheme, and agreed to pay full

restitution. OBOT could receive a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for August 31, 2006, at 2 p.m. before United States District Judge Marvin Shoob.

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

Assistant United States Attorney Lynn M. Adam is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or F. Gentry Shelnett, Chief, Criminal Division, 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.