



Department of Justice

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MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER **SENTENCED TO OVER TWO YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON**

Atlanta, GA - UDO UDO EKPO, JR., 64, of Stone Mountain, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Richard W. Story to 2 years, 3 months in federal prison to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution of \$164,590 in connection with a Medicare fraud scheme.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of 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. This case demonstrates that dishonest providers who cheat Medicare not only will be required to repay what they have stolen but also may find themselves in federal prison."

EKPO, the owner and operator of "V&A Services," a medical equipment supply company located in Stone Mountain, Georgia, was convicted of bilking the federal government through submitting claims for wheelchairs and wheelchair accessories that were not provided to Medicare patients. While operating V&A Services, EKPO initiated 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 Medicare patients. EKPO was convicted by a federal jury on September 1, 2006, on 11 counts of Medicare fraud related to the scheme.

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.

This case was 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 prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias, 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.