



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2012

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyn>

CONTACT: John G. Duncan

(315) 448-0672

DELINQUENT DOCTOR FINALLY REPAYS STUDENT LOAN

Catskill area optometrist pays \$120,000.00

Albany, New York- United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced that his office has reached a settlement with Dr. Christine Scrodanus, a Catskill, New York optometrist, for \$120,000.00. The settlement was in connection with a defaulted Health Education Assistance Loan (HEAL).

On April 29, 1995, Dr. Scrodanus signed a promissory note with SALLIE MAE, INC. in the amount of \$61,838.03, agreeing to repay the student loan at a variable rate of interest. After completing her education, Dr. Scrodanus failed to make any payments on her loan and a default judgment was obtained on February 06, 2007, in the amount of \$121,646.67, which included the principal, interest and fees. Subsequently, attempts were made to resolve the matter informally. However, Dr. Scrodanus failed to respond to correspondence sent to her by the government. As a result, on October 21, 2010, the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) contacted the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and requested the initiation of the Medicare/Medicaid exclusion process for Dr. Scrodanus. She was then given 60 days to either repay the debt in full or negotiate a repayment agreement with the Department of Justice. However, Dr. Scrodanus once again failed to respond and she was excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and all other federal health care programs as of July 29, 2011. After the notice of the exclusion was sent to Dr. Scrodanus, she contacted the USAO in order to resolve

the matter. On April 6, 2012, the USAO finally received a check in the amount of \$120,000.00 from Dr. Scrodanus, an amount agreed upon by HHS and the USAO, to settle the debt.

According to Mr. Hartunian, his office will aggressively pursue those who fail to make good on their promises and obligations to repay their federally backed student loans. Generally, such loans may not be discharged and there is no statute of limitations that would prevent the government from seeking repayment. "It simply is not fair that certain individuals obtain the benefits of receiving student loans, and then act irresponsibly in failing to repay them. We will take whatever steps are necessary to collect these debts."