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**FORMER OWNER OF REST ASSURE HOME MEDICAL
EQUIPMENT SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT
ON HEALTH CARE FRAUD CHARGES**

Defendant Ordered to Pay \$175,923.93 in Restitution

LAFAYETTE, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that the former owner of Rest Assure Home Medical Equipment, located in Rayne, La., was sentenced to five years probation and was ordered to pay \$175,923.93 in restitution for health care fraud related to Medicare reimbursements. The sentence was handed down yesterday in federal court in Lafayette by U.S. District Judge Elizabeth E. Foote.

Dorothy Cole, age 60, of Rayne, La., was charged by Bill of Information on June 20, 2012, with five counts of health care fraud. According to court documents filed at Cole's guilty plea on September 18, 2012, she was the owner and president of Rest Assure Home Medical Equipment. Rest Assure Home Medical Equipment provided durable medical equipment, such as power wheelchairs and scooters to Medicare beneficiaries. Beginning in August of 2007 and continuing through April of 2009, Cole billed Medicare for a more expensive type of wheelchair but provided her customers with cheaper scooters that were not reimbursable by Medicare and less expensive wheelchairs that were reimbursed by Medicare at a lower rate.

During the guilty plea hearing, Cole acknowledged that she submitted false claims to Medicare and obtained \$175,923.93 in Medicare reimbursements to which she was not entitled.

U.S. Attorney Finley stated: "Dorothy Cole violated the law when she collected money from Medicare under false pretenses. Medicare is designed to help Americans, age 65 and older, and younger people, with disabilities. This type of fraud undermines the system and hurts those who are in need of its benefits. Medicare fraud results in the losses of millions of dollars every year. Our office is dedicated to prosecuting those who engage in this type of fraud."

The case was investigated by the Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lafayette Resident Agency, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kelly P. Uebinger.

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