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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Final Arrest in Massive Medicaid Fraud Case

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) has charged the final member of a fraudulent transportation scheme that defrauded the Florida Medicaid program of over \$5 million. An MFCU investigation revealed that the defendants, led by Jose Enrique Hernandez Fernandez, operated a nonemergency medical transportation service that billed Medicaid for thousands of trips never provided. Joseph Chacon, the final suspect in the scheme, was arrested on an outstanding warrant at Orlando International Airport (MCO) on Wednesday, April 23, 2025.

"This scheme defrauded Florida taxpayers and diverted resources meant for patients in need," said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. "With the arrest of the final defendant, justice is catching up to every individual who thought they could exploit the Medicaid system. Under my leadership, we will not tolerate fraud, waste, or abuse—and we will relentlessly pursue those who try to profit at the expense of the people of Florida."

Twenty co-defendants were arrested in October 2023. The investigation revealed that Hernandez Fernandez owned Sweet Transportation, LLC, a company contracted to provide nonemergency medical transportation services to Medicaid recipients. Over at least two years, Hernandez Fernandez and his employees billed Medicaid for thousands of nonexistent trips and inflated mileage on actual trips. GPS data showed that drivers often submitted claims while at home, on vacation, or even out of state.

Chacon, a dual citizen of the United States and Costa Rica, was in Costa Rica when warrants were issued for all suspects involved in the scheme. Although the MFCU coordinated with ICE and the FBI, Costa Rican officials declined to extradite Chacon. However, when Chacon returned to the United States this week, he was detained at customs and turned over to the Orlando Police Department.

Chacon is currently being held in the Orange County Jail and faces a felony charge of Organized Scheme to Defraud.

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The Florida Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigates and prosecutes providers that intentionally defraud the state's Medicaid program through fraudulent billing practices. Medicaid fraud essentially steals from Florida's taxpayers. Additionally, the MFCU

investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program.

The Florida MFCU is funded through a grant totaling \$30,510,157 for Federal Fiscal Year 2025, from the U. S Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General. The Federal Share of these funds is 75 percent totaling \$22,882,620. The State Matching Share of these funds is 25 percent totaling \$7,627,537 and is funded by Florida.