Aug 13, 2021

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone 850-245-0150

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

3 Arrested for Abuse and Neglect Resulting in 3rd-Degree Burns



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, with the assistance of the Orange County Sheriff's Office and Groveland Police Department, today announced the arrests of three Metro Orlando registered nurses for aggravated abuse and neglect of a disabled adult. Christina Hison, Linda Moore and Christopher Rodriguez Lozada are accused of causing third-degree burns to a disabled adult.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This trio was trusted to provide care to a patient suffering from a serious health condition. Instead of acting in the best interest of the patient, they disobeyed hospital policy and established medical procedure. Because of their actions, the patient suffered a new set of medical issues requiring multiple surgeries. Thanks to the work of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and local law enforcement, these caregivers will be held accountable for their neglect and abuse. We will not tolerate abuse of our seniors in Florida."

According to the investigation, Hison, Moore and Rodriguez Lozada worked as registered nurses for Select Specialty Hospital Orlando North, a long-term care hospital in Orlando. In September 2019, the three provided care to a disabled adult suffering from hypothermia. Against hospital policy and established medical procedure, Hison, Moore and Rodriguez Lozada applied ice bags filled with hot water—allegedly from a coffee maker with a hot water dispenser—to the disabled adult's body in an attempt to counter the patient's hypothermia. The disabled adult was then left alone for at least two hours before another employee discovered that the victim sustained

several third-degree burns. As a result, the patient required transportation to Orlando Regional Medical Center to undergo several skin-graft surgeries.

Hison, Moore, and Rodriguez Lozada each face one count of aggravated abuse of a disabled adult, a first-degree felony; and neglect of a disabled adult, a second-degree felony. If convicted, each face up to 45 years in prison and up to $20,000 in fines. The Office of the State Attorney for the Ninth Circuit will prosecute the case.

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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. From January 2019 to the present, Attorney General Moody's MFCU has obtained more than $74 million in settlements and judgments.

The Florida MFCU is funded through a grant totaling $26,329,510 for Federal Fiscal Year 2021, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General. The Federal Share of these funds is 75% totaling $19,747,136. The State Matching Share of these funds is 25% totaling $6,582,374 and is funded by Florida.