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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Fraudulent Service Provider Bills Medicaid Nearly $400,000



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit is announcing the arrest of the owner of a personal care company for forging doctor referrals and fraudulently billing Medicaid. With the assistance of the Ocoee Police Department, an investigation found that Keondra Vernessa Burch, owner of Divinely Chosen Services, submitted fraudulent documents for nearly three years, causing a loss of nearly $400,000 to Medicaid.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This fraudster forged medical records to steal nearly $400,000 from taxpayers. My Medicaid fraud investigators uncovered this scheme and stopped it. Now the defendant will have to answer for his crime in a court of law."

According to the investigation, Burch owned Divinely Chosen Services, a Medicaid provider of personal care services. In order for Medicaid recipients to qualify for these services, a referring physician must deem the care medically necessary and submit appropriate documentation. However, the MFCU investigation revealed that Burch and the company repeatedly submitted forged doctors' referrals to Medicaid so that Burch could bill for providing the unnecessary services. From January 2020 through November 2022, Burch submitted fraudulent documents and billed for these services resulting in the loss of thousands of dollars to the Medicaid program.

Burch faces one count of Medicaid provider fraud, a first-degree felony.

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The Florida Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program. Additionally, the MFCU investigates and prosecutes providers that intentionally defraud the state's Medicaid program through fraudulent billing practices. Medicaid fraud essentially steals from Florida's taxpayers.

The Florida MFCU is funded through a grant totaling $30,219,404 for Federal Fiscal Year 2023, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General. The Federal Share of these funds is 75% totaling $22,664,556. The State Matching Share of these funds is 25% totaling $7,554,848 and is funded by Florida.