



PRESS RELEASE

Baltimore Woman Sentenced in Conspiracy to Commit Medicaid Fraud

BALTIMORE, MD (July 23, 2019) - Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Darnella Carter, 49, of Baltimore was convicted of conspiracy to defraud Medicaid, Medicaid fraud, and obtaining a benefit by fraud for her role in a conspiracy to fill forged prescriptions and fraudulently bill the Maryland Medicaid program. Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Marcus Z. Shar sentenced Carter to five years of incarceration with all but time served suspended, placed her on five years' probation, and ordered that she pay restitution to the Medicaid program in the amount of \$104,000.

Carter was a Medicaid recipient. Co-conspirator Susan Iwunze Nwoga was a pharmacist and owner of Poplar Grove pharmacy located in Baltimore. From 2013 through 2016, Carter presented fraudulent prescriptions to Nwoga, who would collect cash from Carter for filling the fraudulent prescriptions and then submit claims to the Medicaid program for filling the prescriptions. Nwoga submitted the claims despite knowing the prescriptions presented were fraudulent. Nwoga would fill some of the prescriptions and dispense the medications to Carter, who in turn used some of the medications for her own use and sold the remainder. For some of the expensive medications listed on the fraudulent prescriptions, such as medications for HIV, Nwoga would, with Carter's knowledge, submit fraudulent claims to Medicaid without dispensing the medication. Through this scheme, Nwoga stole over \$365,000 from the Maryland Medicaid program.

"Ms. Carter participated in a conspiracy to cheat the state out of hundreds of thousands of dollars," said Attorney General Frosh. "She profited from her role in the fraudulent scheme and unlawfully peddled prescription drugs on the streets."

In February 2019, Nwoga was tried and convicted of felony Medicaid fraud, felony theft, and 287 counts of distribution of controlled dangerous substances. Judge Shar sentenced Nwoga to five years of incarceration for the Medicaid fraud and felony theft convictions; 10 years of incarceration, with all but time served suspended, and five years of probation for two counts of distribution; and one month incarceration, with all but time served suspended, and five years of supervised probation for the remaining distribution counts. In total, Nwoga was sentenced to five years of incarceration, with an additional 20 years' suspended, and five years of supervised probation. A restitution hearing will be held at a later date.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, specifically Assistant Attorneys General Catherine Schuster Pascale and Tracee Orlove

Fruman, Senior Fraud Analyst Shannon Beatty, and Senior Investigative Auditor Todd Sheffer. Attorney General Frosh also thanked the Maryland Department of Health's Office of Controlled Substances Administration for their assistance with the investigation and prosecution of the case.