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PRESS RELEASE

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Prince George's County Physician Indicted for Medicaid Fraud and Drug Distribution

BALTIMORE, MD— Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Vitalis Ohakwe Ojiegbe, 66, of Bowie, was charged in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County with one count of Medicaid Fraud and 32 counts of Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (CDS).

Ojiegbe, a physician specializing in internal medicine, owned and operated Sunrise Medical Clinic, a medical practice located at 9821 Greenbelt Road, in Lanham. Ojiegbe was a Medicaid provider until November 2015, when he voluntarily terminated from the program. It is alleged that beginning in January 2013 and continuing through June 9, 2019, Ojiegbe charged \$200 to his patients, many of whom were Medicaid recipients, for monthly medical appointments, even though the patients could have seen a Medicaid provider free of charge. At the medical appointments, Ojiegbe prescribed controlled dangerous substances, including oxycodone and alprazolam, without a legitimate medical purpose. Ojiegbe's patients, many of whom were his patients when he was previously a Medicaid provider, used Medicaid to pay for the illegitimate prescriptions. Ojiegbe knew or had reason to know that his patients would use Medicaid to pay for the illegitimate prescriptions.

"We allege that Ojiegbe abused his position as a physician and contributed to the spread of opioid addiction in our state," said Attorney General Frosh. "He enriched himself and exploited his vulnerable patients."

Medicaid provides medical insurance coverage for individuals whose incomes are too low to meet the costs of necessary medical services. Felony Medicaid Fraud is punishable by up to five years' incarceration and up to a \$100,000 fine. Distribution is punishable by up to five years' incarceration and a \$15,000 fine for a schedule III or IV CDS, and up to 20 years and a \$25,000 fine for a schedule I or II CDS.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing and all persons charged with a crime are presumed innocent unless and until the State proves the individual guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case is being prosecuted by the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Attorney General's Office in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/061621.pdf>