

May 9, 2012

Dallas, TX

Medical supply company owner sentenced for healthcare and immigration fraud

Dallas — A Plano, Texas, man was sentenced to three years in prison for his involvement in a health care fraud conspiracy and providing false information to obtain citizenship, announced U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas. The immigration case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Okey F. Nwagbara, 45, was sentenced May 7 by U.S. District Judge Sam A. Lindsay to 36 months in federal prison following his guilty pleas in January. In addition, at sentencing, Judge Lindsay revoked Nwagbara's citizenship, cancelling his Certificate of Naturalization issued in January 2008 and ordered that the certificate be immediately surrendered to USCIS.

Nwagbara was the owner and operator of Advanced MedEquip and Supplies, Ltd. (Advanced), a durable medical equipment company located in Richardson, Texas. In pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud, Nwagbara admitted that he paid kickbacks to co-conspirator Jerry Bullard, who worked in the durable medical equipment department of Medistat Group Associates, Inc. (Medistat). The kickbacks were paid to direct business to Advanced and to sign durable medical equipment orders for Advanced. Medistat is an association of health care providers located in Desoto, Texas.

Bullard pleaded guilty in mid-February 2012 to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud.

In pleading guilty to one count of making a false statement in an immigration document and one count of unlawful procurement of naturalization, Nwagbara admitted that he falsely provided information to USCIS on his naturalization application. He admitted that his assertion that he had been living with and married to an individual for three years was false and intentionally misleading and made solely for the purpose of procuring U.S. citizenship.

The health care fraud case was investigated by the Dallas Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT) Strike Force, which includes the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Inspector General, the FBI and the Texas Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Elliott and Mindy Sauter, Northern District of Texas, prosecuted the case.