

N E W S L I N E

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DWC Suspends 18 Medical Providers for Fraud or Loss of License

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has suspended 18 more medical providers from participating in California's workers' compensation system, bringing the total number of providers suspended to 263.

DWC Administrative Director George Parisotto [issued suspension orders](#) against the following providers:

- Obiageli Brooke Agbu of Carson, owner of durable medical equipment provider Ibon, Inc., and Emmanuel Adebayo Ayodele of Rolling Hills, physician and business owner, were convicted in federal court of health care fraud in 2013 for their involvement in an illegal scheme to defraud the Medicare program. Agbu billed Medicare for fraudulent prescriptions written by Ayodele for durable medical equipment and other items and services. Agbu was sentenced to 14 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$887,604 in restitution. Ayodele was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$6,335,949 in restitution.
- Joseph R. Altamirano, Newport Beach physician, was convicted in federal court in 2017 of health care fraud. He was involved in an illegal scheme to defraud Medicare by submitting false and fraudulent claims of more than \$21 million for services that were not provided and for medical conditions that beneficiaries were not experiencing.
- Aniceto Baliton of Diamond Bar and Nestor Domingo of La Verne, co-owners of Bliss Hospice in Glendora, were convicted in federal court in 2017 of conspiracy to pay and receive illegal remunerations for health care referrals. Baliton, Domingo and other co-owners of Bliss Hospice paid kickbacks in exchange for Medicare beneficiaries referred to Bliss and billed by Bliss for hospice services. They also agreed to generate cash for the illegal kickbacks by disguising such monies as payroll expenses.
- Theresa Fisher and Vi Nguyen (a.k.a. Vi Anderson), both physicians of Orange, were convicted in federal court in 2015 of mail fraud for their involvement in an illegal scheme to defraud health insurance carriers. Fisher and Nguyen

performed free or discounted cosmetic surgeries on patients if the patient underwent multiple, medically unnecessary procedures. Fisher and Nguyen then billed health care insurance or benefit programs by making false statements and omitting material information. Fisher was sentenced to 41 months in federal prison and ordered to pay over \$2 million in restitution. Nguyen was sentenced to 27 months in federal prison and ordered to pay over \$2 million in restitution.

- Hakop Gambaryan, Van Nuys durable medical equipment provider and owner of Colonial Medical Supply, was convicted in federal court of health care fraud in 2015. Gambaryan submitted false and fraudulent claims to Medicare for durable medical equipment, primarily power wheelchairs, that were not medically necessary. Gambaryan was sentenced to 84 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$1.74 million in restitution.
- Hovik “John” Simitian and Anahit “Anna” Shatvoryan of Los Angeles operated the Columbia Medical Group, Inc., Life Care Medical Clinic and Safe Health Medical Clinic. They were convicted in federal court of health care fraud and paying and receiving kickbacks for their involvement in an illegal scheme to defraud Medicare. Simitian and Shatvoryan paid illegal kickbacks to marketers who recruited Medicare beneficiaries to their clinics and then submitted fraudulent claims to Medicare for services that were not medically necessary and never provided. Simitian was sentenced to 78 months in federal prison and ordered to pay over \$1 million in restitution. Shatvoryan was sentenced to 46 months in federal prison and ordered to pay over \$1 million in restitution.
- L’Tanya Smith, Los Angeles physician assistant, was convicted in federal court in 2016 of health care fraud for her involvement in an illegal scheme to defraud Medicare by recruiting Medicare beneficiaries to her clinic and ordering medically unnecessary items and services. Smith falsified documentation indicating that the beneficiaries had diagnoses that they did not have. Smith was sentenced to 57 months in federal prison and ordered to pay more than \$4 million in restitution.
- Knarik Vardumyan, Burbank owner of Angeleno Clinic, was convicted in federal court in 2017 of healthcare fraud for directing staff to sign prescriptions and orders for medically unnecessary tests, equipment and home health services to Medicare beneficiaries. Vardumyan also arranged for an employee, who was neither a licensed physician nor physician assistant, to treat beneficiaries and instructed a physician assistant to sign the charts and prescriptions so that the clinic could falsely represent that the physician assistant had treated the beneficiaries. Vardumyan was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$1.7 million in restitution.
- Elaine Lat of Fontana, chief operating officer of Star Home Health Resources, Inc. in La Verne, was convicted in federal court in 2017 of conspiracy to pay and

receive illegal remunerations for health care referrals and paying illegal remunerations for health care referrals. Star paid illegal referral fees to physicians for Medicare referrals. Based on those referrals, Lat and her co-conspirators billed Medicare approximately more than \$4 million.

- Oxana Loutseiko of Granada Hills, general manager of Mauran Ambulance Service, Inc., was convicted in federal court in 2017 of conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud. Loutseiko was involved in an illegal scheme providing unnecessary ambulance transportation services to Medicare beneficiaries and creating fraudulent reasons that justified the services. Loutseiko and her co-conspirators submitted more than \$1 million in false and fraudulent services.

The following providers surrendered their medical license or had their medical licenses revoked:

- John Couch, Mobile, Alabama physician, had his California medical license revoked in 2017 after he surrendered to the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners his authority to order, manufacture, distribute, possess, dispense, administer or prescribe controlled substances. The surrender occurred while Couch was under investigation by the Alabama Board for the alleged prescribing of controlled substances with no legitimate medical purpose.
- Herbert Kloss, Mercer Island, Washington physician, surrendered his California medical license in 2017, after the Washington Medical Quality Assurance Commission entered into a stipulation with Kloss following allegations of unprofessional conduct.
- Thomas Murnane, Delmar, New York physician, had his California medical license revoked in 2017, after the New York State Board for Professional Medical Conduct took disciplinary action against him for negligence and failure to maintain records.
- Frederick Dumas, Mendocino physician, surrendered his medical license in 2016 after the Medical Board accused him of gross negligence and failure to maintain adequate and accurate records.

AB 1244, which went into effect January 1, 2017, requires DWC's Administrative Director to suspend any medical provider, physician or practitioner from participating in the workers' compensation system in cases in which one or more of the following is true:

- The provider has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving fraud or abuse of the Medi-Cal or Medicare programs or the workers' compensation system, fraud or abuse of a patient, or related types of misconduct;

- The provider has been suspended due to fraud or abuse from the Medicare or Medicaid (including Medi-Cal) programs; or
- The provider's license or certificate to provide health care has been surrendered or revoked.

The Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR's) [fraud prevention efforts](#) are posted online, including frequently updated lists for physicians, practitioners, and providers who have been issued [notices of suspension](#), those who have been [suspended pursuant to Labor Code §139.21\(a\)\(1\)](#), and information on [lien consolidations and the Special Adjudication Unit](#).

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.