

Beat: News

Connecticut Ophthalmologist Pleads Guilty to Five-Year Health Care Fraud Scheme

Dr. Donald Salzberg, 67, of Avon, Conn.

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USPA NEWS - A Connecticut doctor pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to receiving kickbacks in exchange for ordering medically unnecessary brain scans.

Dr. Donald Salzberg, 67, of Avon, Conn., pleaded guilty before U.S. Senior District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and one count of conspiracy to receive kickbacks. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled by the Court. Salzberg was charged by an Information on May 23, 2022.

Salzberg, a licensed medical doctor in the State of Connecticut for 36 years, owned and operated Donald J. Salzberg, M.D., an ophthalmology practice in West Hartford, Conn. From 2014 through 2019, Salzberg conspired with a principal for a medical diagnostics company that performed transcranial doppler (TCD) scans – brain scans that measure blood flow in parts of the brain – to order hundreds of medically unnecessary TCD scans in exchange for kickbacks. Salzberg and his co-conspirator used false patient diagnoses to order the unnecessary brain scans, for which the co-conspirator would submit claims to Medicare and other insurance companies on behalf of the medical diagnostic company for payment. In exchange, Salzberg was paid cash kickbacks of \$100 to \$125 per test that he ordered, as well as sham administrative services fees. The scheme resulted in fraudulent bills of over \$3 million to Medicare and private insurance companies.

The charge of conspiracy to commit health care fraud provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of conspiracy to violate the anti-kickback statute provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Phillip M. Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division; Joleen D. Simpson, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation Division, Boston Field Office; Carol S. Hamilton, Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Boston Regional Office; Ketty Larco Ward, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Boston Division; and Christopher Algieri, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, Northeast Field Office. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Rachel Y. Hemani and Howard Locker of Rollins' Health Care Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts press release July 14, 2022

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