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**MEDICAID FRAUD INVESTIGATION INTO TRANSPORTATION SCHEME  
NETS NEARLY 20 ARRESTS BY AGENCIES**

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a multiagency investigation into a local transportation company that billed Medicaid for rendered services has resulted in close 20 arrests on various fraud-related charges. The investigation by the Attorney General's Office and State Attorney's Office resulted in arrests of employees of Sweet Transportation, which billed Medicaid more than \$5 million for fraudulent claims over a two-year period.

Sweet Transportation was a non-emergency medical transportation company that employed more than 30 drivers to transport Medicaid recipients to medical appointments when they had no other means of transportation. However, from August 2020 through November 2022, employees billed trips that were not taken and overstated mileage for reimbursement. Additionally, ringleaders paid some Medicaid recipients to maintain incorrect addresses in the Medicaid system to continue these fraudulent crimes.

The head of the scheme is Sweet Transportation owner Jose Enrique Hernandez Fernandez, who was arrested on one count of Racketeering; one count of Conspiracy to Engage in a Pattern of Racketeering; one count of Medicaid Provider Fraud (over \$50,000); one count of Organized Scheme to Defraud (Over \$50,000); and one count of Money Laundering.

Carlos Omar Tellez Janez participated in the same fraudulent scheme, including billing for trips not taken, training other drivers how to defraud Medicaid, and paying to falsify addresses. In all, Tellez Janez was paid nearly \$500,000 by Hernandez Fernandez over two years.

Attorney General Ashley Moody:

“These fraudsters operated a non-emergency medical transportation service that was supposed to help patients receive care. Instead, they billed Medicaid thousands of trips never provided and inflated the mileage for the trips they actually completed – in all, causing a loss to this taxpayer-funded program of more than \$5 million. Thanks to my team of investigators and our law enforcement partners, this fraudulent transportation company did get somewhere – they each earned a free trip straight to jail.”

Fourth Circuit State Attorney Melissa Nelson:

“This is not a victimless crime – fraudulent financial acts such as this scheme harm taxpayers and patients alike.”

Twenty other drivers have been arrested on one count each of Organized Scheme to Defraud (over \$50,000). Some have also been charged with one count of Racketeering. They are: Timothy Lambert; Luis Alberto Sierra Bernal; Luz Angela Daza Estupian; Marcia Vargas; Omar Andres Sanchez Buitrago; Yilber Ricardo Martinez Quinteo; Aldo Nordelo Janez; Ana Isabel Maur; Dairon Domingues Santana; Fabio Francisco Castaneda Amaya; Iliana Garcia Avila; Astrid Viviana Lineros Orjulea; Juan Carlos Dulzaides Ortega; Martha G. Guevara Paz; Renier Arcencibia Perera; Yoahna Betancourt Fernandez; and Yunier Felix Hernandez Lopez. Joseph Chacon and Juan Gabriel Perez Castro Gutierrez remain at large.

The case was investigated by the Office of Attorney General and State Attorney’s Office with the assistance of the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, Clay County Sheriff’s Office, and Columbus (Georgia) Police Department. They will be prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Jacqueline Hutchins and the State Attorney’s Office Special Prosecution Unit.