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## **Detroit Area Physical Therapist Pleads Guilty to Causing More Than \$1.6 Million in Fraudulent Medicare Billing**

**WASHINGTON, Aug. 26 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/** -- Detroit area physical therapist Jay Jha, 45, pleaded guilty today to participating in a conspiracy to defraud the Medicare program of approximately \$18.3 million, Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Terrence I. Berg of the Eastern District of Michigan and Daniel R. Levinson, Inspector General of the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) announced. Jha, of Troy, Mich., pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud before U.S. District Judge Gerald Rosen. At sentencing, scheduled for Dec. 16, 2009, Jha faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to information contained in plea documents, Jha, a physical therapist licensed in the state of Michigan, began working in approximately February 2003 as a contract therapist for a co-conspirator. The co-conspirator owned and controlled several companies operating in the Detroit area that purported to provide physical and occupational therapy services to Medicare beneficiaries. Jha admitted that he, the co-conspirator, and others created fictitious therapy files appearing to document physical and occupational therapy services provided to Medicare beneficiaries, when in fact no such services had been provided. According to court documents, the fictitious services reflected in the files were billed to Medicare through sham Medicare providers controlled by co-conspirators.

In order to create the fictitious therapy files, Jha acknowledged that his co-conspirators paid cash kickbacks and other inducements to Medicare beneficiaries, in exchange for the beneficiaries' Medicare numbers and signatures on documents falsely indicating that they had received physical or occupational therapy. Jha admitted that he was one of the licensed physical or occupational therapists from whom the co-conspirator obtained signatures on fictitious "progress notes" and other documents in the therapy files, falsely indicating that the therapists had provided therapy services to the Medicare beneficiaries on those dates.

During the course of the scheme, Jha admitted he signed approximately 336 fictitious physical therapy files indicating that he had provided physical therapy services to Medicare beneficiaries, when in fact he had not. Jha admitted that he was paid between \$90 and \$110 for each file that he falsified. Between approximately February 2003 and December 2005, Jha admitted that he falsified

physical therapy files that supported claims to the Medicare program totaling approximately \$1,680,000. Medicare actually paid approximately \$772,800 on those claims. Jha admitted that, throughout the conspiracy, he was fully aware that Medicare was being billed for physical therapy services that he falsely indicated he had performed.

**SOURCE U.S. Department of Justice**