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AHCA Secretary Announces 2015 Fraud Fighter Achievement Award Winners during Fraud Awareness Week

- Professionals recognized for their efforts to prevent fraud in Florida Medicaid program -

Tallahassee, Fla. – Last week, Governor Rick Scott issued a proclamation claiming November 15 – 21 as Fraud Awareness Week. Fraud Awareness Week is an event that seeks to minimize the impact of fraud by promoting anti-fraud awareness and education. The proclamation can be found [here](#).

As part of Fraud Awareness Week, Elizabeth Dudek, Secretary for the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), has announced Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) Jason Mehta, Special Agent Janet Pellicciotti, Special Agent/Criminal Investigator Derek Holt, and Law Enforcement Lieutenant Robert Lassiter as the winners of the 2015 Fraud Fighter Achievement Award. The announcement marks the third year of recognizing those who go above and beyond to identify and fight fraudulent activity in Florida.

Secretary Dudek said, “The actions of Assistant U.S. Attorney Mehta and his team are the embodiment of the values set forth in the Fraud Awareness Week executive proclamation issued by Governor Scott. Their hard work pursuing those who engage in fraudulent activities is greatly appreciated. The Agency works hard to keep Florida families safe, and we are fortunate to have outstanding individuals like Assistant U.S. Attorney Mehta, Special Agent Pellicciotti, Special Agent Holt, and Lieutenant Lassiter in positions where they can protect both the interests of Medicaid recipients and the utilization of taxpayer dollars.”

Mr. Jason Mehta is a prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida; Ms. Janet Pellicciotti is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations; Mr. Derek Holt is a Criminal Investigator with the federal Office of Personnel Management; and Lieutenant Robert Lassiter is a member of the Medical Fraud Control Unit, a subset of Florida’s Office of the Attorney General. This team of federal and state resources collaborated to identify and prosecute individuals engaged in fraudulent billing practices taking place in Northeast Florida.

The team, led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Mehta, conducted a four-year investigation into suspected ambulance billing fraud cases that involved patients being transported by ambulance from the hospital to their personal residence. Their investigation into the use of ambulances for non-emergency rides resulted in the recovery of \$7.5 million of taxpayer money, including hundreds of thousands of dollars in Medicaid funding. According to claims data for the federal program for the elderly and disabled, the Medicare program spent almost \$250 million on similar rides across the country in just six months. Ambulance rides have become a leading source of fraud nationwide, and their work is potentially ground-breaking, as it is the first time any



Department of Justice (DOJ) component has successfully pursued hospitals for their role in causing and ordering unnecessary ambulance rides.

This team was chosen from a pool of highly qualified nominees. A nominee for this award may be a Medicaid recipient or provider, government official or entity, or private citizen who demonstrates the Agency's values – Accountability, Fairness, Responsiveness, Teamwork – in their efforts to detect or prosecute fraud, or prevent fraudulent activity in the health care industry.

For additional information about the award and to view the 2015 Fraud Awareness Week executive proclamation, please visit the Agency's website at <http://ahca.myflorida.com/FraudFighterAward>.

The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 45,000 health care facilities and 34 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at FloridaHealthFinder.gov. For more information about the health information exchange, please visit <http://www.fhin.net/> or <https://www.florida-hie.net>.

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