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PRESS RELEASE

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Fake psychiatrist pleads guilty to identity theft

-man admitted to forging doctors' names on at least 164 prescriptions

WASHINGTON - A Virginia man, Mansour Salahmand, has pleaded guilty to forging doctors' names and using their government-issued identification numbers to write prescriptions to patients, primarily children, for controlled substances, Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips, Patrick Doyle, Regional Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS - OIG), Office of Inspector General (OIG), Chief Cathy L. Lanier, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), Ava A. Cooper-Davis, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Charles J. Willoughby, District of Columbia Inspector General, announced today.

Salahmand, 54, most recently of Sterling, Virginia, entered his guilty plea earlier today before U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly to the charge of Identity Theft. Sentencing is scheduled for December 10, 2009. Salahmand faces a possible sentence under the guidelines of 24 - 33 months of incarceration.

According to the statement of offense signed by the defendant, a psychiatrist is a medical doctor who specializes in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses. Certain drugs, which may be prescribed by psychiatrists, are deemed to be Schedule II controlled substances; the "Schedule II" distinction is given to the most regulated and controlled of the legal drugs. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is an agency of the United States which, among its other duties, regulates the dispensing of controlled substances. DEA registers medical doctors, giving them a "DEA registration number." If a medical doctor holds a current "DEA registration number," then the medical doctor may prescribe controlled substances. In order to write prescriptions for controlled substances in the District of Columbia, a medical doctor working in a clinic must also have permission from the District of Columbia's Controlled Substances Board.

The defendant, Mansour Salahmand, was not a licensed medical doctor. He did not hold a "DEA registration number," nor did he have a District of Columbia controlled substance license. Despite his lack of licensing and credentials, Salahmand sought and obtained employment as a psychiatrist at eight different clinics in the District of Columbia and the State of Maryland. Salahmand worked at these clinics where other licensed psychiatrists were currently working or had worked in the past, including four doctors, identified in court as: Doctors M.P., D.H., T.M., and H.K.

From July 2004 to around October 2006, Salahmand worked at these eight clinics in the District of Columbia and Maryland, purporting to treat patients (primarily children) as a psychiatrist. As a result, the defendant caused these eight clinics to fraudulently charge health care benefit programs for services which purportedly were done by a licensed medical doctor, but were, in fact, performed by him.

During the course of his scheme, Salahmand wrote prescriptions for controlled substances for patients in the District of Columbia or Maryland; at least 164 of these prescriptions were filled at area pharmacies for controlled substances. On these 164 prescriptions, Salahmand forged the signatures for one of four doctors, Dr. D.H., Dr. M.P, Dr. T.M. or Dr. H.K. In addition, Salahmand used the DEA registration numbers of Doctors D.H., M.P., T.M., and H.K.

In announcing the guilty plea, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips, HHS-OIG Regional Special Agent in Charge Doyle, MPD Chief Lanier, DEA Special Agent in Charge Cooper-Davis, and D.C. Inspector General Willoughby commended Diversion Investigators LaVerne L. Stevenson-Maye and Majorie E. Palmer-Nisby (DEA), Detective Samuel Woodson (MPD), Criminal Investigator Sandra Adams (Medicaid Fraud Control Unit), Investigative Assistant Sonja Larsen (HHS OIG), and in particular, they praised Special Agent Tracy McFadden (HHS OIG), the lead case agent on the investigation. In addition, they commended Paralegal Specialists Diane Hayes, Tasha Harris, Maggie McCabe, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Virginia Cheatham, who is prosecuting the case.

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