



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER MEDCLINIC VICE PRESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO CHARGES OF MISAPPROPRIATING MEDICARE MONEY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that MedClinic's former administrator and vice president pleaded guilty in federal court today to charges of misappropriating money from the Medicare program.

Mark Allbert Tighe, 38, of St. Joseph, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this afternoon to a misdemeanor charge of misappropriating less than \$1,000 from Medicare from as early as December 1999 until April 2000.

Tighe was employed as MedClinic's administrator and vice president from at least Jan. 1997, through June 2001. MedClinic is a medical practice with three offices in St. Joseph, Mo., and one rural health clinic in Savannah, Mo.

By pleading guilty, **Tighe** admitted that in December 1999 he obtained information from the Savannah clinic's manager, rural health consultants and other rural health clinics that sufficiently called into question the Savannah clinic's billing procedures pertaining to lab visits, such that the decision was made to terminate the billing procedure as of Dec. 29, 1999.

After billing patient lab visits to Medicare, **Tighe** also admitted that the Savannah clinic would receive Additional Development Requests from Riverbend, a company that handled Medicare reimbursement claims, seeking the dates of service for various visits. **Tighe** admitted that, in response to the Additional Development Requests, he and others would create dictations about the lab visits and add them to patient medical charts, which would entitle MedClinic to more Medicare funds. The new dictations were signed by MedClinic and returned to Riverbend. Based on the dictations, Riverbend paid a number of claims that would not have been paid if the company had received only the original medical charts. Each individual claim was in the amount of \$48.50 and the total number of claims did not exceed 200.

Tighe admitted that the total dollar value of the claims improperly paid was more than \$5,000 but less than \$10,000.

In August 2002, MedClinic agreed to pay \$445,853 in a civil settlement related to the misappropriation of Medicare money.

As a result of pleading guilty to the misdemeanor charge, **Tighe** faces a maximum penalty of one year in federal prison and a fine of up to \$100,000. The court may also issue an order of restitution. **Tighe's** sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing for **Tighe** will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

Initially, **Tighe** was charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on Oct. 1, 2002. Later, **Tighe** and three other individuals were charged together in a second superseding indictment on Feb. 26, 2003. Those charges have since been dropped.

Raghavendra B. Adiga, 44, of St. Joseph, **Juanito L. Villahermosa**, 72, of Savannah, Mo., and **Joseph H. Nadeau**, 41, of Davenport, Wash., were also charged in the second superseding indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City. **Adiga** and **Villahermosa** both worked as medical doctors at MedClinic in Savannah and **Nadeau** was employed as a physician's assistant at MedClinic in Savannah.

As a condition to dismissing the charges against **Adiga**, **Villahermosa** and **Nadeau**, the defendants agreed to report to the appropriate state licensing authorities the facts giving rise to their prosecution in this case. The parties agree that this administrative proceeding is the most appropriate forum for examining the conduct of the defendants. As a result, prosecutors dismissed the charges against these defendants.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Gene Porter. It was investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Inspector General.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow