



PRESS RELEASE

Harlingen business operators charged in multi-million dollar power wheelchair fraud scheme

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas

BROWNSVILLE, Texas – The operators of a durable medical equipment company have been charged with defrauding Medicare, announced U. S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

Authorities took Maria Luisa Yzaguirre, 43, Harlingen, into custody this morning. She is expected to make her initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Ignacio Torteya III at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 31.

Jeremiah Yzaguirre, 44, also of Harlingen, was arrested Aug. 22.

The 16-count indictment charges the operators with conspiracy to commit health care fraud, aggravated identity theft and money laundering.

The charges allege that between 2019 and 2023, the Yzaguires submitted over \$14 million in claims to Medicare for power wheelchairs, power scooters, parts and repairs for 37 individuals. In multiple instances, they allegedly billed Medicare more than \$600,000 for parts and repairs for one Medicare beneficiary and falsely claimed to have replaced expensive parts on numerous occasions.

According to the indictment, in one instance they billed Medicare approximately \$736,072 in parts and repairs for one patient -submitting repair claims 132 times for the expandable controller, 107 times for the motor-gearbox and 84 times for the battery. The patient was bed bound and did not have access to the power wheelchair when the repairs were allegedly conducted.

Additionally, the indictment alleges they used proceeds of the fraud scheme to purchase millions of dollars in real estate, cryptocurrency, stock, a luxury sports car and expensive movie memorabilia.

If convicted, they each face up to 10 years in prison for health care fraud and money laundering and a mandatory two years for each count of aggravated identity theft which must be served consecutively to any other prison term imposed.

The FBI, Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General, Texas Health and Human Services, Texas Attorney General - Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and Texas Department of Insurance conducted the investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Swartz and Ana Cano are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence. A defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted through due process of law.

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HEALTH CARE FRAUD

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