

Lengthy Prison Sentence Awaits Clinic Owner for \$8.9M Fraud Scheme

By Matt Phifer

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- *Owner of two Detroit area clinics sentenced to more than 13 years*
- *Submitted claims for services that weren't necessary, weren't provided, or weren't provided by a doctor*

The owner of two Detroit-area clinics will face over 13 years in prison for her part in an \$8.9 million Medicare fraud scheme.

Judge Robert Cleland of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan Nov. 14 sentenced Jacklyn Price to 160 months in prison and ordered her and her co-conspirators to repay more than \$6.3 million. Price pleaded guilty in April 2017 to one count of conspiracy to commit health-care fraud and one count of health-care fraud.

The sentence is steep, perhaps in part because of lack of cooperation with prosecutors. "The government must have believed that she committed the acts knowingly and not just by mistake," Tom Findley, a former U.S. attorney who is now a member of Baker Donelson's government enforcement and investigations group in Tallahassee, Fla., told Bloomberg Law.

Findley said the government tends to use the civil route more often in health-care fraud cases and that Price's long sentence is probably a result of her not being cooperative or accepting responsibility.

"If the amount of loss is \$8 million, as it is here, you're going to get a higher sentence," Findley said.

Price and her co-defendants allegedly submitted claims for home health-care and physician services that were solicited through kickbacks. Some of the services were not medically necessary, weren't provided at all, or weren't provided by a licensed physician.

The Justice Department, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, and law enforcement agencies are taking major steps to crack down on health-care fraud. This year, the DOJ has charged more than 600 defendants with health-care fraud.

None of Price's co-defendants received a sentence as long as hers. Dr. Millicent Traylor was sentenced to 135 months on Sept. 27 after being convicted on one count of conspiracy to

commit health-care fraud, one count of conspiracy to pay and receive health-care kickbacks, and five counts of health-care fraud.

Muhammad Qazi was sentenced to 42 months on Aug. 27 and Dr. Christina Kimbrough was sentenced to 27 months on Sept. 26. Qazi and Kimbrough each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit health-care fraud.

The case is U.S. v. Price , E.D. Mich., No. 16-cr-20437, sentenced 11/14/18 .

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