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Nessel Charges Second Individual in Medicaid Kickback Scheme

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Agency: Attorney General

Thursday, Sept. 15, 2019

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel today charged Carmen Rembert, 61, of Detroit, with three felony counts of Medicaid Fraud-Kickbacks for her role in abusing the Medicaid system for personal enrichment. The felonies are each punishable by up to four years in prison and/or a \$30,000 fine.

The case was referred to Nessel's Health Care Fraud Division by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Office of Inspector General.

Between January 2015 to December 2017, Rembert owned Personal Care Home Services, LLC. During that time, her co-defendant Eliza Ijames worked for MDHHS as an independent living services specialist within the Wayne County Adult Services office.

The investigation revealed that Ijames was approving Medicaid beneficiaries for home help services (non-skilled services intended to help individuals with activities of daily living) and steering many of her clients to Rembert's business. The State, in turn, made significant payments to Rembert's business for the services provided.

The investigation further revealed that the business's bank account was co-managed by both the defendant and Ijames and both appear to have used it for a kickback scheme, withdrawing thousands of dollars from the account for personal use.

Ijames was charged and convicted earlier this year by the Attorney General's Health Care Fraud Division for multiple felonies stemming from this scheme.

"Kickbacks to a public servant in exchange for a steady stream of Medicaid work is against the law," said Nessel. "Rest assured both sides of any such an arrangement will be held accountable. I want to thank the

team with the MDHHS Office of Inspector General for their diligent and swift work on this case.”

“MDHHS takes very seriously any abuse of the Medicaid system – including any situation in which a department employee takes advantage of his or her position and betrays the public trust as other MDHHS employees are working to help people,” said MDHHS Inspector General Alan Kimichik. “Protecting program integrity is important so that funds are available for Michiganders who are in need of Medicaid benefits and taxpayer dollars are protected.”

Rembert was arraigned before 54B District Court Judge Andrea Larkin and given a \$90,000 personal bond. She is due back in court for a pre-trial conference at 8 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 9.

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Please note: A criminal charge is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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