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Physician Who Billed COVID-19 UIP Quarter Billion Dollars Is Indicted

By Nina Youngstrom

A California physician has been indicted for allegedly cheating the COVID-19 uninsured program (UIP) out of \$150 million, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California said Sept. 28.^[1] Anthony Hao Dinh, D.O., of Newport Coast, an ear, nose and throat physician and plastic surgeon, allegedly submitted claims for services provided to patients with insurance or for services that weren't performed or weren't medically necessary from July 2020 to March 2021.

Dinh also is accused of defrauding other COVID-19 relief funds: the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster loan program.

The UIP—which is run by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)—reimburses providers for testing, treatment and vaccines provided to people without insurance. A recent audit by the HHS Office of Inspector General concluded that in the first 10 months of the program, providers received \$784 million in overpayments stemming from services that weren't related to COVID-19 or from services provided to people with insurance.^[2] HRSA plans to recover the money.

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