



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FORMER KC DOCTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO MEDICARE FRAUD

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a former Kansas City physician pleaded guilty in federal court today to participating in a scheme to defraud Medicare of millions of dollars through a program that provides motorized wheelchairs to patients.

Ambrose Wotorson, 70, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Liberia residing in Kansas City, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to the charge contained in a Jan. 4, 2006, federal indictment. **Wotorson** was a licensed osteopathic physician and surgeon during the time of the fraud scheme, Graves added, but has surrendered his medical license and no longer practices medicine.

By pleading guilty today, **Wotorson** admitted that he was involved in a scheme to defraud Medicare by means of false and fraudulent pretenses between Jan. 24, 2002, and Sept. 15, 2005. Under the terms of today's plea agreement, Graves said, **Wotorson** will forfeit to the government his residential property located at 6026 Euclid Ave., in Kansas City, Mo., as well as all funds in two accounts at United Missouri Bank, which represents the proceeds acquired from **Wotorson's** criminal activities.

The fraud scheme involves Medicare's program (known as Part B) that covers the cost of physicians' services and certain other services such as durable medical equipment. Under this program, Graves explained, Medicare pays 80 percent of the allowed amount of claims submitted by medical providers who certify that they performed a reasonable and medically necessary service to an eligible patient. If a physician completes a Certificate of Medical Necessity (CMN) verifying that a Medicare beneficiary is so physically disabled that he needs a motorized wheelchair in order to move about, the CMN can be used to get Medicare to pay approximately \$4,000 toward the cost of purchasing a power wheelchair.

Wotorson admitted that he falsely and fraudulently signed Certificates of Medical necessity for Medicare beneficiaries, certifying that the beneficiaries were eligible to receive a motorized wheelchair from Medicare when, as he knew, those beneficiaries were not medically eligible. Other members of the fraud scheme provided **Wotorson** with cash payments and kickbacks that he took in exchange for providing them with the false and fraudulent Certificates fo Medical Necessity.

Wotorson also acknowledged that the loss associated with the scheme to defraud Medicare was in excess of \$1 million and could be more than \$2.5 million.

Under federal statutes, **Wotorson** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Senior Litigation Counsel Gene Porter. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Office of Investigations for the Health and Human Services 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/index.html