



For Immediate Release

Office: (614) 705.1190

Media.Relations@pharmacy.ohio.gov

Columbus Pharmacist Sentenced for Health Care Fraud Scheme

COLUMBUS, Ohio – On September 11, 2018, Maria Mascio, 62, of Columbus, Ohio, was sentenced in U.S. District Court to 24 months in prison and ordered to pay \$1.1 million in restitution for executing a decade-long health care fraud scheme.

Benjamin C. Glassman, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Angela L. Byers, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Division, Lamont Pugh, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, Mark S. McCormack, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Metro Washington Field Office, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Steven W. Schierholt, Executive Director, State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy and Jim Wernecke, Director, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation special investigations department, announced the sentence handed down today by U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson.

According to court records, Mascio, a licensed pharmacist and owner of Family Medical Pharmacy and Visions Systems in Columbus, Ohio, executed a health care fraud scheme for at least a decade (from 2003 through 2013). Her scheme caused a loss of \$1.1 million.

Mascio schemed to defraud Medicare, Ohio Medicaid, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation and private insurers by billing for sample drugs that could not be legally sold and for medications that had not been dispensed.

Mascio owned an office building on Karl Road in which her pharmacy and the medical offices of two doctors were located. Mascio directed pharmacy employees to remove prescription drug samples from the medical offices and place them in a storage room used by the pharmacy.

After collecting the drug samples, Mascio or employees under her direction removed the drugs from their individualized packaging and stored them in plastic bins. They disposed of the sample packaging in the dumpster located on the premises of the pharmacy and placed the sample drugs into the pharmacy inventory where they were co-mingled with the pharmacy's stocked drugs and dispensed to the general public.

Mascio also orchestrated the submission of false claims for the sample drugs to health care benefit programs, including Medicare, Ohio Medicaid and Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation.



She pleaded guilty in May to one count of health care fraud scheme and one count of conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States.

"I commend the hard work done by our partners at the state and federal level" said Executive Director Steve Schierholt. "Through their hard work, a decade of health care fraud and unsafe practices have been put to an end."

The Board would like to thank the FBI, Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, Ohio Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation and FDA, as well as Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth F. Affeldt and Special Assistant United States Attorney Maritsa A. Flaherty of Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's office, who are prosecuting the case.

###