March 28, 2011

PERMIAN BASIN CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY COUNSELOR INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY FOR MAKING FALSE CLAIMS TO THE GOVERNMENT

United States Attorney John E. Murphy announced the indictment and arrest of 61-year-old Ismael Hernandez Sanchez of Odessa, Texas, a licensed chemical dependency counselor doing business as "SR & Associates," for allegedly billing the Government for counseling services which he never provided to United States Bureau of Prisons (BOP) inmates.

The indictment, returned on March 23, 2011, and unsealed today, charges Sanchez with six counts of making false claims to the United States. According to the indictment, in September 2006, Sanchez was selected to be the local provider for substance abuse treatment services to federal offenders who were being supervised by the Court following their federal incarceration and to defendants who were being supervised while their trials were pending. Per the agreement, Sanchez was to perform family counseling at $70/hour, individual counseling at $56/hour and group counseling at $40/hour to BOP inmates being housed at, or supervised by, the Dismas Charities Halfway House in Midland.

The indictment alleges that on six occasions in 2009, Sanchez knowingly made false representations or claims to BOP for reimbursement for family counseling services which never occurred.

Sanchez, who was arrested on Friday, faces up to five years in federal prison and a maximum $250,000 fine per count upon conviction. It is important to note that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt.

This case was investigated by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney John Klassen is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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