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DA PAT LYKOS ANNOUNCES 14 YEAR SENTENCE ON MEDICAID THEFT CASE

(Houston, TX) A woman who formed a fraudulent corporation to bilk Medicaid out of hundreds of thousands of dollars was sentenced to 14 years in prison Tuesday. Christine Lee Jones, 47, pleaded guilty to the charge of aggregate theft over \$200,000 in the 184th District Court. Judge Jan Krocker heard evidence against Jones and assessed the prison sentence.

Jones formed a company called "Center for Developing Healthy Minds" that served as a front for a scheme of fraudulent Medicaid billing. Jones told parents that her company would provide free after-school care for their children and attained their Medicaid numbers for "emergency purposes". She then used the numbers to bill the government for millions in counseling services, alleging treatment for depressive and psychotic disorders that did not exist. Jones used her sister's (a medical doctor) Medicaid number to perpetuate the scheme.

Assistant District Attorney Renee Magee, Chief of the Public Assistance Fraud Section, handled the prosecution. Magee stated, "This defendant stole hundreds of thousands of dollars from our Medicaid programs. The monetary loss in this case not only affects our children's healthcare and the needy, but it comes directly out of the pockets of the taxpayers."

Harris County District Attorney Pat Lykos commended Magee, adding, "These crimes are particularly despicable because she was stealing from children and the poor."

Magee heads up Lykos' section that prosecutes fraud against public welfare systems, including food stamps, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, government grants and housing, and veterans' benefits. Last year, the section prosecuted approximately 400 cases and collected \$1.7 million in restitution. (END)