



AG ANNOUNCES INDICTMENT OF BESSEMER PHARMACIST FOR MEDICAID FRAUD, THEFT OF OVER \$50,000 FROM MEDICAID AGENCY

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced the arrest of Alan Bruce Connell, 68, a Bessemer pharmacist and former owner of Westlake Pharmacy in Bessemer, on four counts of filing false claims with the Alabama Medicaid Agency and one count of first-degree theft of property.

The Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit presented evidence to the January 2015 term of the Montgomery County grand jury, resulting in an indictment* charging Connell with filing numerous false claims for payment to the Alabama Medicaid Agency totaling over \$50,000.

It is alleged that Connell conspired with the mother of a terminally ill child to bill the Alabama Medicaid Agency for expensive medications that the child required but were not dispensed by Connell. As part of the alleged scheme, the mother of the child would take her child's prescriptions to Connell, who would submit a claim with the Alabama Medicaid Agency for reimbursement. Connell would then give the mother cash. A review of Connell's records revealed that during the time period in question he did not have enough of the medication in stock to be able to dispense the amount he billed the Alabama Medicaid Agency.

No additional information about the investigation or the alleged crimes may be disclosed at this time.

The case was investigated by the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit after being referred for investigation by the Program Integrity Division of the Alabama Medicaid Agency. Medicaid Fraud is an unclassified felony with a maximum possible prison sentence of five years. Theft of property in the first degree is a class "B" felony, which carries a possible prison sentence of two to 20 years.

Attorney General Strange commended his Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for their steadfast investigation of this case. He also thanked the Alabama Board of Pharmacy for assistance.

**An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*

