

NEWS ADVISORY

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2015

For More Information, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Claire Haynes (334) 242-7351

Page 1 of 1

AG ANNOUNCES ARREST OF BESSEMER WOMAN ON CHARGES OF CONSPIRING WITH BESSEMER PHARMACIST TO DEFRAUD MEDICAID AGENCY

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Luther Strange announced the arrest of Sonia Judd Coleman, 34, of Bessemer, on four counts of filing false claims with the Alabama Medicaid Agency and one count of first-degree theft of property. Coleman was arrested this morning by Jefferson County Sheriff's Office deputies.

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 Coleman for her role in the filing of numerous false claims for payment to the Alabama Medicaid Agency totaling over \$50,000.

It is alleged that Bessemer pharmacist Alan Bruce Connell conspired with Coleman, whose minor child suffers from a terminal illness, to bill the Alabama Medicaid Agency for expensive medications the child required but were not dispensed by Connell. As part of the scheme, it is alleged that on several occasions Coleman took her child's prescriptions to Connell, who submitted a claim with the Alabama Medicaid Agency for reimbursement. Coleman would receive cash payment for the prescriptions. A review of pharmacy's records revealed that, during the time period in question, Connell did not have enough of the medication in stock to be able to dispense the amount he billed the Alabama Medicaid Agency. Connell was arrested on the same charges yesterday.

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 twenty years in the Department of Corrections.

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.*

--30--

