Miami-Dade HIV Specialists Charged With Medicare Fraud, Flee Country

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Two Miami-Dade brothers, Ronald and Jose Nogueira, were charged with Medicare fraud for submitting about $14 million in fraudulent bills for HIV services that were not provided to patients at the T&R Rehabilitation Clinic, *The Miami Herald* reports. The brothers, who owned and operated the clinic, have fled the country and are believed to be in Central America.

The Nogueira brothers were charged April 7 along with four other clinic employees. Joaquin Vega, the clinic's medical director whose medical license was revoked in 2006, is accused of signing false prescriptions of the cancer drug Rituxan for HIV patients.

According to the article, the indictment states Vega submitted claims "for the cost of injection and infusion treatments that were medically unnecessary and were not provided." In addition, the Medicare program reimbursed more than $4 million to T&R Rehabilitation. Hundreds of thousands of those funds were laundered to an investment and medical company.

The T&R Rehabilitation probe grew out of a larger investigation by the Miami Justice Department and U.S. Attorney's Office into Medicare fraud involving HIV infusion scams within the last 10 years.

The Health and Human Services inspector general's office reported that South Florida clinics submitted $2.2 billion in HIV therapy claims in 2005.

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