



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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**WACO PSYCHOLOGIST SENTENCED ON
HEALTH CARE FRAUD AND MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES**

United States Attorney John E. Murphy announced that in Austin today, 55-year-old Mercy Chieza of Hewitt, Texas, was sentenced to 37 months imprisonment as a result of her conviction on Health Care fraud and money laundering charges. In addition to the prison term, Senior United States District Judge James R. Nowlin ordered Chieza to serve three years of supervised release after completing her imprisonment and pay \$664,215 restitution to the Texas Medicaid Program.

Chieza, a licensed psychologist, owned and operated Chieza Psychological Services in Waco, Texas. Pleading guilty to the charges in December 2009, Chieza admitted that from at least 1999 until October 2007, she executed a scheme to defraud the Texas Medicaid Program that involved: submitting multiple fraudulent billings; filing claims for services rendered that were not personally performed by Chieza, as required by law; and filing claims for services that were not provided at all.

In particular, as part of her scheme, Chieza admitted she billed for services which totaled more than twenty-four hours in a single day; billed for services in a single day which amounted to more than double the normal business hours of her practice; billed for services allegedly rendered during weekends, holidays, and times that she was known to be out of town and away from her practice; submitted claims for services for multiple time periods which were, in fact, rendered during a single time period; and, submitted claims for services and evaluations not actually performed by Chieza, as she was required by law to perform herself.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation, and the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Texas Attorney General's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Devlin prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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