



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Letizia Tagliaferro

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 13, 2019

OWNER OF ESSEX COUNTY MEDICAL TRANSPORT COMPANY PLEADS GUILTY TO HIS ROLE IN MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR HEALTHCARE AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

ALBANY – New York State Inspector General Letizia Tagliaferro today announced the guilty plea of a taxi and medical transport company owner for his part in a multi-million dollar Medicaid and workers' compensation fraud involving nearly a dozen companies servicing the Adirondack and Capital regions.

Saleem Hayat, 36, of Port Henry, owner of Moriah Cab Service, pleaded guilty today in Moriah Town Court to Disorderly Conduct. As part of his plea, Hayat paid \$75,000 in restitution and forfeited a vehicle that was previously seized. Hayat was among 13 taxi and medical transport company owners and operators arrested in May 2018 on State and Federal charges alleging millions of dollars in theft and fraud against the Medicaid and workers' compensation systems. Several additional defendants have pleaded guilty in State and Federal Court while charges remain pending against others.

The pleas and remaining charges are the result of a two-year joint State and Federal investigation that included the execution of multiple search warrants and 13 arrests in May 2018. The allegations included billing Medicaid for trips that never occurred, bribing Medicaid recipient patients with kickbacks for using their specific transport companies, failing to provide employees of the transport companies with required workers' compensation insurance, and filing documents falsely certifying required workers' compensation coverage in order to provide Medicaid transport services. Altogether, the charges allege millions of dollars in fraudulent Medicaid billings and the investigation is ongoing.

Medicaid is a county, state and federally funded benefit program providing health care coverage for individuals with limited income.

“These taxi companies have been blatantly abusing the Medicaid and workers' compensation systems and placing their employees at risk for years,” said **Inspector General Letizia Tagliaferro**. “Today's plea shows there are real consequences for such actions, and I thank my local, State and Federal law enforcement partners for their extraordinary work in putting an end to these criminal practices.”

Inspector General Letizia Tagliaferro thanked United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York Grant C. Jaquith and his office for prosecuting the federal charges in these cases, the New York State Police Special Investigations Unit and Troop B for their work investigating these cases, Rensselaer County District Attorney Mary Pat Donnelly and her office for prosecuting the State charges, Essex County District Attorney Kristy Sprague and her office for their assistance with the investigation and prosecutions, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its assistance on the investigations.

Others assisting with the investigations include the New York State Joint Task Force on Worker Exploitation and Employee Misclassification, New York State Department of Labor, New York State Workers'

Compensation Board's Compliance Division, Office of the New York State Comptroller Division of Investigations, New York State Attorney General's Office's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Essex County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, and the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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