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HUMBOLT PODIATRIST SUED FOR FRAUDULENT BILLING OF FOOT STRAPPING

Nashville- Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III has filed a lawsuit against Dr. Joel Scott Craig for violation of the Tennessee Medicaid False Claims Act.

In the complaint, the State alleges Dr. Craig, who operates Milan Foot Care, fraudulently billed TennCare for foot and ankle strapping services that were medically unnecessary.

When performed by podiatrists, strapping refers to the application of overlapping strips of rigid, non-elastic tape to the foot or ankle to exert pressure and serve as a splint to hold a structure in place and reduce motion.

Foot strapping procedures are considered medically necessary for: acute sprains and strains; dislocations; fractures; tendinitis and synovitis; plantar fasciitis; and tarsal tunnel syndrome. In general, foot strapping procedures are used by podiatrists for no more than two to three weeks.

The State alleges Dr. Craig devised a scheme to treat patients with procedures they did not need, then present false information to TennCare for payment. During the investigation, Dr. Craig's patients described their foot strappings as unnecessary and unhelpful and requiring frequent follow-up appointments over long periods of time.

The State estimates Dr. Craig has overbilled TennCare by more than \$150,000.

"Personal enrichment through TennCare fraud will not be tolerated by this Office," said General Slatery. "We appreciate the help of the TennCare Office of Program Integrity for identifying the highly unusual number of procedures which prompted our investigation in this particular case."

The State is requesting a jury trial, damages three times the amount the defendant is accused of falsely overbilling, and a civil penalty of \$5,000-\$25,000 for each violation.

To read the complaint, click here:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2020/pr20-31-complaint.pdf>

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