

Attorney General Charlie Crist

News Release

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PHARMACY OWNER ARRESTED FOR STEALING \$290,000 IN MEDICAID FUNDS.

MIAMI - Attorney General Charlie Crist and Miami Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle today announce the arrest of Antonio Calatayud, 63, owner of Primera Farmacia Latina Inc. on felony charges of Medicaid fraud.

"The identities of some of our most vulnerable citizens were used for ill-gotten gain and state funds were obtained through fraudulent means," said Crist. "These arrests are a warning that these practices will not be tolerated in our state."

The investigation began when the Agency for Health Care Administration notified the Attorney General's Office that the Miami pharmacy was billing the Medicaid program for pharmaceutical drugs never dispensed to the Medicaid recipient whose account was billed. The pharmacy is located at 300 S.W. 107th Avenue.

An in-depth audit showed that the pharmacy billings to the Medicaid program for drugs allegedly dispensed were much higher than their purchase invoices. The audit results clearly revealed that Primera Farmacia Latina Inc., through its owner, defrauded the State of Florida's Medicaid program of more than \$290,944 between January 23, 1999, and October 20, 2000. In excess of 1,300 claims were linked to fraudulent prescriptions submitted by the pharmacy to substantiate its billings to the Medicaid program.

Calatayud is the sole owner of the pharmacy and resides at 14232 S.W. 21 Terrace, Miami. He is charged with one count each of Organized Scheme to Defraud and Grand Theft, both first-degree felonies, each with maximum penalties of 30 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine and 10 counts of Medicaid Fraud, third-degree felonies which carry maximum penalties of 5 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine for each count.