
Women sentenced for Medicaid fraud

A Parsons woman and her niece received probation and a \$3,461.04 restitution order for defrauding the Kansas Medicaid program.

Michelle D. Ramirez, 40, of Parsons and Kyleigh C. Dixon, 23, of Lawrence and were charged in Labette County District Court with making a false claim to Medicaid and conspiracy to make a false Medicaid claim, both felonies. The complaint alleges that between Jan. 1, 2009, and May 31, 2009, Dixon obtained \$3,461.04 from Medicaid for allegedly providing care to Ramirez.

Assistant Attorney General Stefani Hepford said previously that while Dixon was a student at the University of Kansas she agreed to be Ramirez' care attendant and that Southeast Kansas Independent Living in Parsons served as the billing agent for Medicaid. Dixon signed blank time sheets, Ramirez filled them out and turned them in to SKIL. When Dixon was paid, she split the money with Ramirez, Hepford said. Dixon had a job in Lawrence at the time and would not have been able to provide the care for her aunt during the times she reportedly did the work, Hepford said.

Ramirez pleaded no contest to making a false claim against the Medicaid program, a level nine felony. Dixon pleaded no contest to conspiracy to make a false claim against Medicaid, a level 10 felony.

On Monday, District Judge Jeffry Jack sentenced Ramirez to seven months in prison. Her sentence could have been six months, but he increased the penalty by a month because she had involved her niece in the scheme, putting the conviction on her record for a long time. Judge Jack then suspended the prison term, as required by Kansas Sentencing Guidelines, and granted Ramirez probation for a year and ordered her to pay \$3,461.04 in restitution to the Kansas Medicaid program, along with Dixon.

Ramirez, who is disabled, had several conditions of probation waived, such as gaining or maintaining employment, doing community service work or repaying the state for her attorney's fees.

Dixon received six months in prison. The term was suspended, based on sentencing rules, and she received probation for a year. Her attorney, Shane Adamson, said his client may seek to expunge the conviction from her record in the future. An expungement wipes the conviction from any criminal history check, though it still appears on certain law enforcement records checks.

In other felony cases:

- Jake E. Cervantes, born in 1987, 2001 Ash, pleaded no contest Monday to trafficking contraband (methamphetamine) in a correctional institution, a level five felony, and

two misdemeanor counts of theft. According to Labette County Attorney Hillary McKinney, on March 4 Cervantes was being taken to jail and during a strip search a string was found dangling from a private area on his body. The string was attached to something containing meth. The theft charges resulted from the discovery of propane and other tanks that had been taken from Grandview Products and Ruskin Manufacturing. Sentencing for Cervantes will be June 7. Judge Jack denied a request from Cervantes for a 48 hour furlough from jail before his sentencing because of Cervantes' prior drug use. McKinney has already agreed to support a shorter prison term for Cervantes, 36 months.

- Robert E. Tipton, 26, of Vinita, Okla., received 11 months in prison Monday for possession of meth and eluding officers, both felonies. The prison term was suspended, as required by sentencing laws, and he received probation for a year. He is to undergo a drug and alcohol evaluation and follow any treatment recommendations and pay \$2,648.49 in restitution to Bartlett Coop and the Labette County sheriff. Tipton and Brandon D. Oakley, 28, of Afton, Okla., were involved in a lengthy pursuit with law officers last summer after they were spotted taking a trailer from the Bartlett Coop in Bartlett. The pursuit reached speeds in excess of 100 mph.