

## Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

### Doctor Can Never Use That Title Again, Judge Orders

A defrauder of Medicare gets stripped of her freedom, her medical license--and her title.

After U.S. District Judge **David Hittner** sentenced **Callie Hall Herpin** to 10 years in prison for health care fraud, he ordered her never to call herself a doctor again. "I consider you a disgrace to every physician in this country," he told her, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Herpin was convicted of running a clinic that didn't treat any patients, but instead churned out false prescriptions for Vicodin and codeine-fortified cough syrup. She also allegedly prescribed unnecessary wheelchairs in a scheme that defrauded Medicare and Medicaid of \$13 million. She must repay \$12.9 million.

If Herpin ever calls herself a doctor after she gets out of prison, Hittner will send her back inside for violating his order, he said. "You will, from this date forward, immediately correct any individual or entity referring to you as doctor, M.D. or physician," Hittner instructed. Hittner wanted to sentence her to 27 years instead of 10, but her plea agreement capped her sentence at the federal maximum.