

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Note: Medicare Strike Force Prosecutes Record Number of Healthcare Fraudsters

If it feels like news about healthcare prosecutions is winding down, don't be fooled—the news may have lessened, but the actual prosecutions have increased.

That's the word from a recent Department of Justice news release, which indicates that a record number of health care prosecutions took place in Fiscal Year 2013 thanks to the efforts of the Medicare Fraud Strike Force.

"These record results underscore our determination to hold accountable those who take advantage of vulnerable populations, commit fraud on federal health care programs, and place the safety of others at risk for illicit financial gain," said Attorney General **Eric Holder** in a Jan. 27 news release. "By targeting our enforcement efforts to 'hot spots' in nine cities, the Medicare Fraud Strike Force is allowing us to fight back more effectively than ever before."

The strike force currently operates in the following nine cities: Baton Rouge, La.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Chicago; Dallas; Detroit; Houston; Los Angeles; Miami and Tampa, Fla. Since its inception just seven years ago, strike force prosecutors have charged more than 1,700 defendants who have collectively billed the Medicare program more than \$5.5 billion.

"The Medicare Fraud Strike Force is one of this country's most productive investments," said Acting Assistant Attorney General **Mythili Raman** of the Justice Department's Criminal Division in the news release. "We are not only putting hundreds of criminals who steal from Medicare in prison, but also stopping their theft in its tracks, recovering millions of dollars for taxpayers, and deterring potential criminals who ultimately decide the crime isn't worth it."

Resource: To read the complete news release on this topic, visit www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2014/January/14-crm-082.html.