



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Ohio

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## **GRAND JURY RETURNS 10-COUNT INDICTMENT AGAINST SPINE SURGEON ALLEGING HEALTH CARE FRAUD**

CINCINNATI – A federal grand jury returned a ten-count indictment against Abubakar Atiq Durrani, 44, Mason, Ohio alleging that, beginning in 2009, he convinced patients to undergo medically unnecessary spinal surgeries then billed private and public healthcare benefit programs millions of dollars for the fraudulent services.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Lamont Pugh III, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, Kevin R. Cornelius, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation Cincinnati Field Office (FBI), Robert Corso, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Bret Flinn, Resident Agent in Charge, Defense Criminal Investigation Service (DCIS) announced the indictment returned today.

Durrani owns a private practice called the Center for Advanced Spine Technologies (CAST) with offices in Evendale and Florence, Kentucky.

The indictment alleges that, in some instances, the scheme to defraud resulted in serious bodily injury. As part of this scheme to defraud, Durrani performed unnecessary procedures and made false statements in relation to lumbar, thoracic, and cervical surgeries

The indictment alleges that Durrani would tell the patient the medical situation was urgent and that back surgery was needed right away. He would also falsely tell the patient that he/she was at risk of grave injuries without the surgery. For cervical spine patients, Durrani would often tell a patient that there was a risk of paralysis or the head would fall off if the patient was in a car accident because there was almost nothing attaching the head to the patient's body.

The indictment also alleges that Durrani made false statements to patients, colleagues and hospitals in order to further his scheme.

The indictment charges Durrani with five counts of health care fraud and five counts of making false statements in health care matters. Health care fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in prison. The crime of making false statements in health care matters is punishable by up to five years in prison. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of any proceeds Durrani received as a result of the scheme.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by agents and officers of the agencies named above, along with the Ohio Medical Board and Kentucky Medical Board, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Timothy Mangan and Emily Glatfelter, who are representing the United States in the case.

Anyone suspecting health care fraud, waste or abuse can report it by calling the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General at 800-447-8477. To learn more about health care fraud prevention and enforcement go to [www.stopmedicarefraud.gov](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov). Ohioans can report suspected instances of health care fraud to Attorney General DeWine's office by calling 1-800-282-0515.

An indictment contains allegations and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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