

*Jackie Lacey*  
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NEWS RELEASE

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## **Chiropractor Pleads in \$150 Million Insurance Fraud Scheme**

A 56-year-old chiropractor has pleaded guilty for his role in a massive workers' compensation insurance fraud and conspiracy scheme, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Paul Turley (dob 11/12/62) of Granada Hills made a factual basis plea on Monday to one count each of conspiracy to commit insurance fraud, mayhem, insurance fraud and unlawful patient referral. As part of the written plea agreement filed with the court, Turley detailed his involvement in the scheme.

He faces up to eight years in state prison. Sentencing is set for June 14.

Deputy District Attorneys Dayan Mathai, Catherine Chon, Karen Nishita and Kennes Ma are prosecuting the case.

Turley is among a dozen defendants who were indicted by a grand jury in 2015 for fraudulently billing tens of millions of dollars to insurance companies for fraudulent surgeries, prescription medications, fake MRIs, falsifying medical reports and office visits.

Prosecutors later divided the larger case into three smaller ones in an effort to streamline the complex litigation and refile several counts that previously had been dismissed. However, indictments remain against orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Munir Uwaydah, and his office manager, Wendee Luke, both of whom are fugitives.

The conspiracy allegedly included paying lawyers and marketers as much as \$10,000 a month for illegal patient referrals, known as "capping."

Nearly two dozen patients allegedly were deceived into having surgeries they thought would be performed by Uwaydah. Instead, a physician's assistant who never attended medical school, carried out invasive and sometimes unnecessary surgeries. Uwaydah was not present in the operating room for all surgeries, prosecutors said.

In addition, nearly two dozen patients have lasting physical scars and many needed additional surgeries to repair the original injury.

Last year, co-defendant Marissa Nelson (dob 11/29/76) pleaded guilty to one felony count of conspiracy to commit insurance fraud and admitted a special allegation of taking property of a value exceeding \$3.2 million. She faces up to nine years in state prison when she is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 25.

The other 10 defendants are awaiting trial. Among the charges they each face are conspiracy, money laundering and unlawful patient referral. Some of the defendants also face aggravated mayhem charges.

The cases were investigated by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation and the Organized Crime Division.

### **[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.