



PRESS RELEASE

Physician assistant admits to unlawful practice of medicine

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas

BROWNSVILLE, Texas – A 50-year-old Brownsville man has pleaded guilty to health care fraud in relation to his work at an area mental health clinic, announced U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

In July 2021, the Texas Medical Board deemed Fernando Mendez a “continuing threat to public welfare” and suspended his license as a physician assistant.

However, he continued to practice medicine at CCI Therapy Counseling Centers International P.C. (CCI), which has locations in Harlingen and Brownsville, following the suspension.

Mendez further admitted he manufactured medical records to make it appear a different medical provider had seen CCI patients when he was the one who had actually done so.

U.S. District Judge Fernando Rodriguez Jr. accepted the plea and will impose sentencing Oct. 2. At that time, Mendez faces up to 10 years in federal prison and possible \$250,000 maximum fine.

Mendez was permitted to remain on bond pending that hearing.

The FBI, Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General (OIG), Texas Health and Human Services, Texas Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and Department of Homeland Security-OIG conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Swartz is prosecuting the case.