

## **OMIG Statement on Sentencing of Dr. Suresh Hemrajani**

*January 19, 2012* – Dr. Suresh Hemrajani was sentenced yesterday in New York City to two to six years behind bars after having been convicted last month of charges that he stole \$700,000 from New York State’s Medicaid program by prescribing HIV medications for people who didn’t have the virus.

“This case began with a hotline call to the Office of the Medicaid Inspector General,” said Acting Medicaid Inspector General James C. Cox. “Our investigators worked with Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. and the New York City Human Resources Administration to achieve the conviction in December. The testimony of one of our investigators was instrumental in providing evidence against this physician.”

This sentencing, Cox added, “should be a warning to unscrupulous providers that New York State will not tolerate patient abuse and misuse of taxpayer-funded health care. Government agencies are collaborating to protect healthcare services and public dollars so that Medicaid funds will be available for those in need.”

As proven at trial, throughout 2008, Dr. Hemranjani wrote prescriptions for HIV medications for numerous patients without determining whether they actually had HIV. These drugs are expensive, and Dr. Hemrajani prescribed them to the individuals on their first visit to the office, billing the cost to New York’s Medicaid program. He then created false records for his purported treatment of the patients, even though, in most cases, these individuals did not visit his office more than once.

Dr. Hemrajani then charged Medicaid for initial patient visits and subsequent visits that did not take place. When some of these patients later attempted to obtain HIV prescriptions from a hospital, one of them was tested and found to be HIV-negative, which prompted an investigation by OMIG, the Human Resources Administration’s Bureau of Fraud Investigation, and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office.

Thirty of his patients have been criminally charged with trading the drugs for cash with middlemen, who then sold the drugs illegally. So far, 19 have been sentenced for their role in this scheme.