



United States of America v. Abyssinia Love Knot

The National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association is proud to recognize the **United States of America v. Abyssinia Love Knot** investigation and prosecution teams with this year's **Investigation of the Year Award – Honorable Mention**.

This team investigated the largest pill mill operation in the Detroit metropolitan area from 2009 through 2016. Abyssinia Love Knot (ALK) and 1st Priority Physical Therapy (1st Priority) were clinics owned and operated by Pastor Shirley Douglas and her son, Malik Fuqua. Douglas, an ordained pastor, abused her position as a clergy member and her church to further her health care fraud and drug diversion scheme.

From 2009 through 2016, ALK and 1st Priority billed approximately \$36 million to Medicare and \$5.5 million to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and were paid approximately \$10.5 million on those claims for physical therapy services that were either medically unnecessary or never provided. Doctors controlled by Douglas and Fuqua prescribed approximately 4.5 million opioid dosing units, which included controlled substances such as oxycodone and oxymorphone. These dangerous opioids were then sold on the street in metro-Detroit or in other states.

Douglas and Fuqua pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances. On December 19, 2019 and March 10, 2020, Douglas and Fuqua, respectively, were both sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Fuqua was ordered to forfeit almost \$717,000.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations

Christopher T. Gould, *Special Agent*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Criminal Division, Fraud Section

Drew Bradylyons, *Trial Attorney*

Patrick J. Suter, *Trial Attorney*

Thomas Tynan, *Trial Attorney*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Drug Enforcement Administration

Thomas Farrell, *Special Agent*

James M. Koss, *Special Agent*

Bradley M. Patton, *Detective*

Stephen G. Schneider, *Task Force Officer*

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN

Raymond J. Evans, *Investigator*

James Stewart Howell, Jr., *Investigator*

Brian Zasadny, AHFI, *Fraud Senior Investigator*