

Healthcare fraud news briefing

February 2010

1. Counterfeit medicine worth more than 10.5 billion Euros per year

18.02.2010

A survey, commissioned by Pfizer and carried out by market researcher Nunwood, has estimated that the counterfeit medicines market in Europe is worth more than 10.5 billion Euros per year.

The analysis shows how one in five of the 14,000 people surveyed (in 14 European countries), equating to 77 million people in the total population, admitted to buying prescription-only medicines from illicit sources.

2. NHS fraudster says that she stole GBP 1,500 'to support her family'

21.02.2010

A health worker has been responsible for defrauding NHS Lothian of more than GBP 1,500 due to falsely filling out her time sheets. She did this because her partner at that time was unable to work to a serious road accident. It is said that she was guilty of fraud as claimed to have worked an extra 177 hours whilst working as a part time administration assistant. When confronted about this issue, she resigned. Sheriff Katherine Mackie sentenced Samuel to 200 hours community service and commanded that she pay back the outstanding cash, which was a much lower sentence than originally anticipated.

3. New figures show big discrepancies in GPs' funding

23.02.2010

Figures that were provided by a London primary care trust, due to a request made under the Freedom of Information Act have shown large differences in funding between general practices in the UK.

For example, it has been demonstrated that the highest paid practices in Camden, north London, earn more than twice as much per patient as the lowest paid

4. The US decides on the fate of fraudulent doctor, Weinberger

23.02.2010

Recently it was confirmed that Weinberger will spend at least a few more months in jail by the U.S. District Court in Hammond where he waived his right to a quick trial but did not disagree with the government's request to keep him in jail. In 2006, the American surgeon was indicted by a US federal grand jury on 22 counts of medical fraud and could face up to 300 civil claims filed by former patients. Cases involve him telling his patients he was going to perform surgery on them and then would put them under anesthesia. However, in reality he never performed the surgeries, but would still invoice their insurance companies for this.

5. EU Parliament's dissatisfaction with Šemeta

25.02.2010

The European Parliament, have recently criticized Algirdas Šemeta, the new EU Commissioner for anti fraud for two specific decisions concerning the management of OLAF. These decisions include his continued support for OLAF to become independent from the Commission and instating Nicholas Ilett as the acting Director – General.