

For Immediate Release
Contact: Alexis Lambert
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(850) 413-2842

Florida CFO Jeff Atwater Announces 9 Arrests in Undercover Sweep of Tampa Accident Clinics

TALLAHASSEE—Florida Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater today announced the arrest of nine accident clinic employees for soliciting undercover agents posing as accident victims.

A long-term investigation by the Florida Department of Financial Services' Division of Insurance Fraud and the Tampa Police Department revealed that employees at multiple accident clinics, including Tampa Rehab Center, Auto Injury Doctors of Tampa and PVC Medical Center, paid fraud investigators posing as accident victims to sign fraudulent treatment forms attesting to medical services they never received. The clinics subsequently submitted fraudulent claims to insurance companies including Nationwide, Farmers, Progressive and 21st Century Insurance.

“Florida’s auto insurance system has become a feeding frenzy for those who are looking to make money off the backs of consumers,” CFO Atwater said. “My office will continue to partner with state and local law enforcement agencies to dismantle these organized crime rings and put the crooks behind bars.”

The individuals arrested during the sweep include Tavares Castillo, 37; Jose Luis Avila Robles, 30; Jorge Luis Gutierrez, 33; Jose Miguel Alvarado, Jr., 29; Yankiel Cordero, 21; Yankiel Borrego, 31; Blanca M. Acosta, 53; Evelisse Acosta, 42; and Alfredo Rodriguez, 41. The individuals were arrested on third-degree felony charges for patient brokering and filing fraudulent insurance claims. If convicted, they each face up to 15 years in prison.

This case is part of a continuing crackdown by CFO Atwater’s Division of Insurance Fraud in the fight against auto insurance fraud in Florida.

Anyone with information regarding suspected insurance fraud is asked to call 1-800-378-0445. Individuals who provide tips can remain anonymous and are eligible for a reward of up to \$25,000 for information that directly leads to an arrest and conviction in an insurance fraud scheme. The Department of Financial Services to date has awarded almost \$250,000 to approximately 40 citizens as part of its Anti-Fraud Reward Program.

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Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, a statewide elected official and officer of the Florida Cabinet, oversees the Department of Financial Services. CFO Atwater’s priorities include fighting financial fraud, abuse and waste in government, reducing government spending and regulatory burdens that chase away businesses, and providing transparency and accountability in spending.