

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on August 10, 2000, Dr. Samir Najjar, M.D., pled guilty to a one count Information in Federal District Court, Jacksonville, FL, of making a false statement to the U.S. Government in connection with TRICARE. A sentencing of March 5, 2001 has been set. Najjar faces a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The plea was the result of a multi-agency Federal task force investigating health care fraud in Northeast Florida. The investigation disclosed Dr. Najjar submitted fraudulent patient progress notes written by Dr. Najjar, knowing them to be false, to TRICARE in connection with a Government audit of filed insurance claims. Dr. Najjar created fraudulent patient progress notes that contained embellishments and expanded representations concerning patient treatments and diagnoses. Dr. Najjar's notes were an attempt to substantiate claims and mislead Government auditors. The amount of loss to the Government and private insurance companies is approximately \$5 million dollars.