

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on April 24, 2001, Dr. Samir Najjar, M.D., a practicing physician of Jacksonville, FL, was sentenced by Federal District Judge Henry J. Schlesinger, Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville, FL. Dr. Najjar was ordered to serve 36 months in confinement, 36 months of supervised release, pay \$5 million in restitution, and a \$50 special assessment fee. Dr. Najjar's sentencing is the result of an earlier guilty plea to presenting false claims to the U.S. Government.

The sentencing is the result of a five year long, multi-agency Federal task force investigation focusing on 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 misleading and expanded representations concerning patient treatments and diagnoses. Dr. Najjar's notes were an attempt to substantiate claims and mislead Government auditors.