

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on April 17, 2000, John M. Sutherland and Morris Kelly each pled guilty to a one count information before Federal District Judge John E. Steel of the Middle District of Florida, Jacksonville, Florida. On September 27, 1999, Sutherland and Kelly were each charged with filing a false claim against the U.S. Government, in connection with health care claims made to TRICARE (formerly CHAMPUS-Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services), Medicare and other healthcare programs.

The guilty pleas were the result of a multi-agency Federal task force operation investigating health care fraud in Northeast Florida. The investigation disclosed that Sutherland and Kelly were owners and operators of a business known as National Vascular Clinic. National Vascular operated clinics throughout Florida. Sutherland and Kelley filed claims against the U.S. Government knowing the claim to be false. The clinics were billing for tests never administered and billing for tests that were not medically necessary.

A sentencing date has not been set. Kelly and Sutherland each face a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.