

The Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that on April 19, 2001, Dr. Bipin Patel, New Port Richey, FL, was sentenced in U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida, Tampa, FL. Patel previously pled guilty for conspiring to defraud the TRICARE and Medicare health care programs by taking kickback payments from Community Clinical Laboratories, Inc., Clearwater, FL, for patient referrals. Patel was sentenced to 24 months probation, \$17,000 in restitution, a \$2,000 fine and a \$100 special assessment fee.

Community Clinical Laboratories, Inc., a blood laboratory, and its president, vice president and general manager, previously pled guilty on April 7, 2000, to paying doctors kickbacks. To date, 14 doctors have been indicted for receiving kickbacks. In addition to today's sentencing, there have been six doctors convicted and sentenced. The total recoveries prior to today's sentencing are \$178,022.