



NEWS RELEASE

Attorney General Mike Hilgers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 27, 2024

Omaha-area Mental Health Therapist Ordered to Serve Five Years Probation and Pay Restitution

Nebraska Attorney General Mike Hilgers announced today that an Omaha-area mental health therapist was ordered to serve five years of probation and pay \$60,000 in restitution to Nebraska's Medicaid program. Pamela J. Helem pled no contest and was found guilty of a felony count of Medicaid Fraud, a Class IV felony.

Helem, 69, of Papillion, owned and operated Helem's Counseling and Consulting in Omaha. An investigation by the Medicaid Fraud and Patient Abuse Unit of the Nebraska Attorney General's Office found that Helem billed Nebraska Medicaid for providing mental health services while she was actually at one of the casinos in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Helem faced a possible sentence of two years in the state penitentiary.

As part of her probation, District Judge Leigh Ann Retelsdorf ordered Helem to undergo a gambling addiction risk assessment, not participate in any type of gambling or enter any gambling establishment, and perform 400 hours of community service through the United Way of the Midlands.

Helem is also a defendant in a civil lawsuit pending in Lancaster County District Court, where the Nebraska Attorney General's Office alleges that she submitted additional claims to Nebraska Medicaid in violation of the False Medicaid Claims Act. In that lawsuit, the State argues that Helem did not keep any records to substantiate that she provided the services she billed for.

Agencies who assisted with the Nebraska Attorney General's Office investigation include the Program Integrity Unit of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Iowa Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, and the Nebraska State Patrol.

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