

# Health Care Fraud: How a Strike Force is Selected for a City

During the latest National Health Care Fraud Takedown, investigators targeted Houston and Dallas to identify and charge more than 40 people with a range of fraud allegations.

How is a region designated as a health care strike force area? Former federal prosecutor and Houston trial attorney **Ashlee McFarlane** of **Gerger Khalil & Hennessy** explains in a post on the website of **Androvett Legal Media & Marketing**.

“Dallas is a health care strike force city, meaning the Department of Justice and federal agencies have identified Dallas (like Houston) as a hot bed for health care fraud, based on data analysis and reviewing payments of claims submitted to federal health care benefit programs like Medicare,” says McFarlane.

“Kickbacks are the foundation of almost every health care fraud case. “As a former prosecutor, I can tell you—kickbacks are the first thing agents and prosecutors look for in building an investigation.

“There’s no way to know the number of kickbacks being paid in a city. You have to start investigating a case. However, when there are providers who are outliers in the billing data, federal agents often look to see if kickback payments are used to induce referrals.”

Dallas and Houston are among 10 locations nationwide with Medicare Fraud Strike Force operations. According to the Department of Justice, a Medicare Fraud Strike Force consists of a partnership between the DOJ and Department of Health and Human Services to prevent fraud and enforce anti-fraud laws.

