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Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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Former Missouri Health Care Charity Executives Plead Guilty to Multimillion-Dollar Bribery and Embezzlement Scheme

Two former executives of a Springfield, Missouri-based charity pleaded guilty yesterday to their roles in a multimillion-dollar public corruption scheme that involved embezzlement and bribes paid to multiple elected public officials in the state of Arkansas.

According to court documents, Bontiea Bernedette Goss, 63, and her husband, Tommy “Tom” Ray Goss, 66, were high-level executives at Preferred Family Healthcare Inc., a charity that provided a variety of services to individuals in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Illinois, including mental and behavioral health treatment and counseling, substance abuse treatment and counseling, employment assistance, aid to individuals with developmental disabilities, and medical services. In exchange for the bribes and kickbacks offered and paid by the Gosses and other co-conspirators, elected state officials in Arkansas provided favorable legislative and official action for the charity, including, but not limited to, directing funds from the state’s General Improvement Fund (GIF).

Under the terms of their respective plea agreements, the Gosses must forfeit to the government up to \$4.3 million as determined by the court at their sentencing.

Bontiea Goss pleaded guilty to conspiracy to pay bribes and kickbacks to elected public officials in Arkansas. Tom Goss pleaded guilty to participating in the conspiracy by embezzling funds from the charity, as well as by paying bribes and kickbacks to elected public officials in Arkansas. Tom Goss also pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and assisting in the preparation and presentation of a false tax return. Bontiea Goss faces up to five years in federal prison without parole. Tom Goss faces up to eight years in federal prison without parole. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Earlier this year, Preferred Family Healthcare agreed to pay more than \$8 million in forfeiture and restitution to the federal government and the state of Arkansas under the terms of a non-prosecution agreement, which acknowledges the criminal conduct of its former officers and employees.

Several former executives from the charity, former members of the Arkansas state legislature, and others have pleaded guilty in federal court as part of the long-running, multi-jurisdiction, federal investigation including the following:

- Former Chief Executive Officer, Marilyn Luann Nolan of Springfield, Missouri, [pleaded guilty in November 2018](#) to her role in a conspiracy to embezzle and misapply the funds of a charitable organization that received federal funds.
- Former Director of Operations and Executive Vice President Robin Raveendran, of Little Rock, Arkansas, [pleaded guilty in June 2019](#) to conspiracy to commit bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds.
- Former executive and head of clinical operations Keith Fraser Noble, of Rogersville, Missouri, [pleaded guilty in September 2019](#) to concealment of a known felony.

- Former employee and head of operations and lobbying in Arkansas, Milton Russell Cranford, aka Rusty, of Rogers, Arkansas, was sentenced to seven years in federal prison without parole after pleading guilty to one count of federal program bribery.
- Political consultant Donald Andrew Jones, aka D.A. Jones, of Willingboro, New Jersey, pleaded guilty in December 2017 to his role in a conspiracy from April 2011 to January 2017 to steal from an organization that receives federal funds.
- Former Arkansas State Senator Jeremy Hutchinson, of Little Rock, Arkansas, pleaded guilty in June 2019 to conspiracy to commit federal program bribery.
- Former Arkansas State Representative Eddie Wayne Cooper, of Melbourne, Arkansas, pleaded guilty in February 2018 to conspiracy to embezzle more than \$4 million from Preferred Family Healthcare.
- Former Arkansas State Senator and State Representative Henry “Hank” Wilkins IV pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit federal program bribery and devising a scheme and artifice to defraud and deprive the citizens of the state of Arkansas of their right to honest services.

Senior Litigation Counsel Marco A. Palmieri and Trial Attorney Jacob Steiner of the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section; Supervisory Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall Eggert and Assistant U.S. Attorney Shannon T. Kempf for the Western District of Missouri; Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Mazzanti for the Eastern District of Arkansas; and Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven M. Mohlhenrich for the Western District of Arkansas are prosecuting the separate criminal cases.

IRS Criminal Investigation, FBI, and the Offices of the Inspectors General from the Departments of Justice, Labor, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) investigated the cases.

This is a combined prosecution with the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity Section, the Western District of Missouri, the Eastern District of Arkansas, and the Western District of Arkansas.

Topic(s):

Public Corruption

Component(s):

Criminal Division

Criminal - Public Integrity Section

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