

NEWS RELEASE

*OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS*

*RANDY G. MASSEY
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY*

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

July 17, 2006

AUDIOLOGIST SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR FRAUD IN PROVIDING HEARING AIDS TO MINERS.

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on July 13, 2006, **DAVID M. LEWIS**, age 37, of Marion, Illinois was sentenced to 12 months and one day imprisonment, fined \$50,000, and paid restitution in the amount of \$172,786.89 to Freeman Coal and Arch Coal Companies on a plea of guilty to a six count Information which charged mail fraud, healthcare program fraud and structuring offenses.

Five counts involved claims for reimbursement for expensive hearing aids provided to 61 Coal Mine Healthcare Plan beneficiaries for which forged doctor's prescriptions were submitted. **DAVID LEWIS** is a corporate officer of Lewis Enterprises which did business in Southern Illinois as Audibel Hearing Center, Beltone Hearing Center and Nu-Ear Hearing Center. **LEWIS** is a licensed audiologist that targeted the sale of hearing aids to miners represented by the United Mine Workers of America. **LEWIS** forged doctors' signatures and falsified doctors' prescriptions in the providing of hearing aids.

A single count involved the structuring of three cash withdrawals to avoid the filing of Currency Transaction Reports (CTR) by a financial institution for transactions involving \$10,000 or more.

Information for this prosecution was obtained by a federal task force including Agents of the United States Department of Labor Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations and Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Insurance Crime Bureau. The case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Michael J. Quinley.