



COUNTY OF FRESNO

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District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 2018

67 COUNTS OF INSURANCE FRAUD FILED AGAINST BENTA FRIES FOR OVERBILLING INSURANCE COMPANIES OF BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

Benta Jean Fries (49, of Clovis) has been charged in a Felony Complaint with charges related to the overbilling of insurance companies for the reimbursement of breast prosthetics and undergarments for breast cancer patients, the Fresno County District Attorney's Office has announced.

The California Department of Insurance, in conjunction with the Fresno County District Attorney's Office, conducted a nearly two year joint investigation, culminating in the arrest of Benta Fries today, December 14, 2018. It is alleged that between October 1, 2014 and April 10, 2018, Benta Fries, d.b.a. Silhouette Breast Prosthetics, overbilled insurance companies approximately \$270,415.00, with potential losses reaching more than \$1,200,000.00.

The alleged fraud was initially detected after Fresno area breast cancer patients reviewed their Explanation of Benefits and discovered that their insurance carrier, Blue Shield of California, had been charged by Benta Fries for products that they never received, or for more expensive products than those they purchased. Blue Shield of California conducted an investigation that was then forwarded to the California Department of Insurance. Detectives from the CDI and Investigators from Fresno County District Attorney's Office then conducted a comprehensive investigation, leading to the charges and today's arrest.

The Felony Complaint charges Ms. Fries with sixty-seven (67) counts of Insurance Fraud, as well as an allegation that the taking involved more than \$100,000. [Penal Code § 550(a)(5) & 186.11(a)(1).]

If convicted of the charges and allegations, Ms. Fries faces a potential sentence of up to seventy-three (73) years in prison, a fine, and restitution. However, upon reaching age 60 and after serving 25 years, Ms. Fries will be eligible for release under the Elderly Parole Program.

Ms. Fries is currently in custody at the Fresno County Jail. She is expected to be in Department 10 of the Fresno County Superior Court for her Arraignment on Monday, December 17, 2018, at 8:30 a.m.

The Media may email FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov or contact Administrative Assistant Geri Benavides at (559) 600-4441 with questions.

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