

CBS Evening News with Tony Dokoupil

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Hospice Fraud Investigation]

TONY DOKOUPIL: We have an update tonight in our CBS News investigation into hospice fraud in Southern California. Our team was the first to report charges filed against more than 20 suspects in what's described as a \$267 million fraud case with zero legitimate patients. Here's CBS News correspondent Adam Yamaguchi.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: CBS News Uncovers Red Flags for Hospice Fraud]

ADAM YAMAGUCHI: CBS News obtained exclusive body camera footage showing California Department of Justice officers raiding 10 homes and offices in a crackdown of suspected hospice fraud. State Attorney General Rob Bonta says they've charged 21 suspects.

CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL ROB BONTA (D): What will address fraud is us doing the hard work, heads down, sleeves rolled up, doing the investigation, doing the arrests, doing the prosecutions.

YAMAGUCHI: Here's how Bonta describes the alleged scheme. The suspects purchased personal information from the dark web, used it to enroll in California's state-run Medicaid program, then used 14 hospice companies to bill the government for this phantom care. All of it coming from taxpayers.

BONTA: There were no actual services, no hospice centers.

YAMAGUCHI: For months, CBS News has been uncovering signs of potential hospice fraud. We found one doctor's name on claims from 126 hospices. He wouldn't speak with us. Medicare chief Dr. Mehmet Oz announced on social media they revoked that doctor's ability to bill the system. It's become a political flashpoint with Democrats and Republicans trading blame, even as state and federal officials try to work together.

CALIFORNIA DEPT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES TYLER SADWITH: It is a challenging time between some states like California and our federal partners. We remain committed to partnership.

YAMAGUCHI: CBS News has learned those officials are now working through 300 open investigations in California. Adam Yamaguchi, CBS News, Los Angeles.