

South Florida doctor among '8 worst insurance criminals' of 2016

By: Charles Elmore

Eight 2016 inductees into a group's Insurance Fraud Hall of Shame Wednesday included a South Florida doctor sentenced for prescribing expensive anti-psychotic drugs even when patients did not need them.

Fernando Mendez-Villamil of Miami, 49, was sentenced in July to 12 years in prison and ordered to repay \$50 million for prescriptions that defrauded payers including federal agencies. He apologized to the court: "I know what I did was wrong, was dishonest."

Other inductees from around the nation included an arsonist who botched a scheme to get insurance money for a fire and killed two neighbors, according to the list compiled by the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, a Washington, D.C.-based organization supported by insurance companies and others.

Also inducted: The perpetrator of what was said to be the nation's largest-ever no-fault whiplash crash scheme, and a caregiver who starved a cerebral palsy victim to death while stealing Medicaid money.

Health-related scams are the fastest growing category of insurance fraud, said James Quiggle, the group's communications director.

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**Coalition Against
Insurance Fraud**