



OIG NEWS

Office of Inspector General
330 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D. C. 20201
(202) 619-1343

For Immediate Release
December 11, 2002

OIG SAVES TAXPAYERS RECORD \$21 BILLION

The Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) saved American taxpayers a record \$21 billion in Fiscal Year 2002, Inspector General Janet Rehnquist announced today.

The Inspector General said the savings were achieved through an intensive and continuing crackdown on waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare and over 300 other HHS programs for which the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has oversight responsibility.

“At a time of growing concern about the status of the economy and corporate America’s integrity, taxpayers can be confident in the determination of my office to protect their tax dollars against waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement,” the Inspector General said. “Through our audits, investigations and evaluations we will continue to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in all of the department’s programs and operations—taxpayers deserve nothing less.”

The \$21 billion saved is \$3 billion more than the savings reported for FY 2001 and \$13.5 billion more than what the OIG saved taxpayers in FY 1997, when Congress greatly increased the authorities and financial resources of federal agencies to combat health care fraud.

The savings consist of \$1.49 billion in investigative receivables, \$426 million in audit disallowances, and \$19.9 billion in the implementation of OIG recommendations to achieve Medicare efficiencies through reduced costs and improved operations. The savings, for the most part, were independently scored by the Congressional Budget Office.

Inspector General Rehnquist said that in FY 2002 the agency performed or oversaw 2,372 audits, conducted 70 evaluations of department programs, and opened 1,654 new civil and criminal cases, bringing to more than 2,700 the number of active OIG investigations. Additionally, the OIG excluded 3,448 individuals and entities from participation in Medicare, Medicaid and other federally sponsored health care programs, and its enforcement efforts resulted in 517 criminal convictions and 236 successful civil actions.

In other activities, the OIG's crackdown on child support defaulters resulted in 152 convictions and court-ordered criminal restitution of over \$7 million during the fiscal year. In a national operation, the OIG and HHS' Office of Child Support Enforcement organized and led the department's largest ever dragnet for delinquent parents with substantial arrearages who had fled across state lines to evade their financial obligations. The coordinated sweep by OIG, U.S. Marshals Service, and state and local police resulted in the arrests of 70 of the nation's most wanted deadbeat parents.

Details of some of the activities are contained in the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to the Congress*. It is available on the Internet at www.oig.hhs.gov/publications/semiannual.html

###

