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## Clearwater pain doctor cleared in Medicare fraud case

By Lorri Helfand, Times Staff Writer

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A Clearwater pain doctor accused of six counts of Medicare fraud was found not guilty on Friday.

In February, authorities said Jayam Krishna Iyer, 59, submitted about \$457,000 in claims for services performed by another doctor. That doctor could not file Medicare claims because of a prior felony conviction.

Iyer's lawyer, George Tragos, said his client wasn't aware of the other doctor's history.

"She didn't know he was banned from Medicare," Tragos said. "This was not a willful or intentional fraud."

Iyer's case was part of a nationwide Medicare fraud sweep. Law enforcement agents charged 111 people in nine U.S. cities with filing millions of dollars in bogus claims.

Iyer's federal trial in Tampa lasted about a week.

"She's thrilled. Her patients are thrilled. She operates a pain clinic with many critically ill patients," Tragos said. "They don't have to worry now because she's been vindicated."

Iyer is also battling two lawsuits linked to the death of a patient under her care. About seven years ago, Theresa Ann Kincaid, 44, was found dead of an accidental overdose of several prescription drugs, Pinellas-Pasco medical examiner's records said. One suit filed in 2007 alleges that Iyer's negligence in prescribing medications led to Kincaid's premature death.

The other suit, filed in 2009 by Iyer's insurer, seeks to void Iyer's policy, claiming she submitted an application with false information about a federal criminal charge in 2000 after authorities said she illegally prescribed controlled substances to undercover operatives.

Iyer, who denied the allegations in the 2000 case, pleaded not guilty and entered a pretrial diversion program, with the charges dropped after she completed it.

Then, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration revoked her registration to prescribe in 2006, saying she had violated federal law. An appeals court set aside that order in 2007 and returned the case to the DEA for reconsideration.

In late 2008, the DEA granted the renewal of her registration, enabling her to resume prescribing.

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