



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE • COMMUNICATIONS
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County Efforts Continue to Target Worker's Compensation Fraud

(Santa Ana, CA) — An ongoing effort by the County of Orange to target suspected instances of worker's compensation fraud resulted in the arrest this week of a man who claimed to have been disabled after an on-the-job vehicle accident.

While completing community service hours for an earlier DUI conviction, Bartolo Hernandez Orona was a passenger in a County truck in August 2009 when the driver hit a tree. In 2014, he filed a worker's compensation claim for injuries, claiming to be completely disabled by the accident after having undergone two back surgeries. He is accused of seeking work between November 2014 and August 2015 as a day laborer and observed moving furniture down a flight of stairs, gardening and riding a bicycle.

Orona is scheduled to be arraigned on June 13. The County is seeking \$55,873.76 in restitution.

His arrest is the result of an ongoing multi-level effort by County officials to target those suspected of collecting benefits they did not earn.

In May, a 10-year County employee pleaded guilty to four misdemeanor counts of fraud and was ordered to pay \$30,271.80 in restitution. He was placed on three years of informal probation and required to complete 100 hours of community service.

In August 2015, the County successfully prosecuted a similar case against another employee who claimed that an on-the-job back injury left him unable to work when he had suffered injuries earlier in non-work vehicle collisions.

The County vigorously seeks restitution from those found guilty of obtaining fraudulent benefits.

Workers' compensation fraud drains public treasuries by contributing to the high cost of insurance and self-insurance. It harms employees by undermining the perception of those legitimately claiming on-the-job injuries to receive the benefits to which they're entitled. The California Department of Insurance estimates that workers' compensation fraud costs the state between \$1 billion to \$3 billion each year.

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