

Jackie Lacey
District Attorney
<http://da.lacounty.gov>



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Greg Risling, Assistant Chief
Media Relations Division

213-257-2000

GRisling@da.lacounty.gov

Twitter: @LADAOoffice

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Former Rehab Center Owner Sentenced in Sex Assault, Healthcare Fraud Cases

The founder of a Los Angeles drug and alcohol treatment facility was sentenced today to more than 50 years in state prison for sexually assaulting seven women over a two-year period, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Christopher Bathum (dob 9/22/61) was sentenced to 52 years and eight months in prison and ordered to be registered as a sex offender for life.

In February 2018, jurors found Bathum guilty of 31 counts, including forcible rape, sexual penetration by foreign object, forcible oral copulation and sexual exploitation.

Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller of the Sex Crimes Division prosecuted the case.

Bathum owned and operated Community Recovery of Los Angeles and other entities in Southern California and Colorado.

Evidence presented at trial showed that Bathum preyed upon female patients between 2014 and 2016 by providing them with drugs as they battled to overcome their addiction. He then sexually assaulted them while they were under the influence, the prosecutor said.

The victims' ages range from their 20s to their early 30s. Several of the assaults happened at the facilities that he operated.

Bathum also was sentenced to 20 years in prison for running a \$175 million fraudulent healthcare billing scheme. The sentence will run concurrent to the 52-year term he received in the sex assault case.

In January, the defendant pleaded no contest to seven counts of grand theft, five counts of insurance fraud and one count each of identity theft and money laundering.

Deputy District Attorney Shaun Gipson of the Healthcare Fraud Division prosecuted the case.

Bathum and co-defendant Kirsten Wallace (dob 4/3/73) obtained multiple health care insurance policies for their clients, using their personal identifying information and falsified the clients' circumstances to obtain the policies. The patients were unaware that policies had been issued in their name.

Bathum and Wallace also billed for former clients after their treatment ended while those clients were still working at CRLA and no longer receiving treatment.

Between June 2012 and December 2015, Bathum and Wallace fraudulently billed an estimated \$175 million. In most instances, bills were sent for services never provided.

About \$44 million was paid out by five insurance companies.

Wallace was sentenced in 2018 to 11 years in state prison after she pleaded no contest to 46 felony counts related to the same healthcare billing scheme.

Cases BA451664 and BA451669 were investigated by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation and the California Department of Insurance.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.