



## U. S. Department of Justice

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### **TWO CHICAGO ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEYS HONORED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY**

CHICAGO – Two Assistant United States Attorneys in Chicago were among those honored this month at the Justice Department's 55th Annual Awards Ceremony at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Samuel B. Cole and Michele M. Fox, both Assistant U.S. Attorneys in the Northern District of Illinois, received the Attorney's General's Award for Distinguished Service for obtaining the largest jury verdict in the nation's long history of the federal False Claims Act.

Mr. Cole, 34, of Deerfield, joined the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2003. Ms. Fox, 58, of Algonquin, joined the office in 1989.

"In achieving their record-setting result, Sam and Michele did a masterful job under trying conditions against a large, well-represented major insurance company," said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. "Few of these cases are ever tried, and this case serves as a prime example to fraud defendants of the perils of going to trial against the United States."

Following a trial and judgment issued last year in U.S. District Court in Chicago, the defendants, Amerigroup Illinois and Amerigroup Corp., were held accountable for seeking to

exclude pregnant women from their insurance pool. The total award in the health-care fraud case, after trebling and penalties, was more than \$344 million. Their efforts, together with private plaintiff's counsel and the Illinois Attorney general's Office, are having an ongoing beneficial effect on False Claims Act negotiations throughout the country, Mr. Fitzgerald noted.

"The award recipients are extraordinarily dedicated and talented men and women," said Peter Keisler, Acting Attorney General. "They've made incredible sacrifices, and achieved great successes, working on the front lines of the Justice Department on behalf of the American people. I'm proud to have them as my colleagues as we work to advance the Department's mission."

The Attorney General's Annual Awards Ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of a number of U.S. Department of Justice employees as well as individuals from outside the Department.

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