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Roane County Grand Jury indicts two former officials of Community Health Network for Theft

Kingston, Tennessee (Wednesday, October 17, 2012) -

District Attorney General Russell Johnson announced that he presented a case to the Roane County Grand Jury on Monday involving the former director and assistant director of Community Health Network, Inc. (sometimes hereinafter 'CHN'). Community Health Network, Inc. was a Tennessee based non-profit company that began operation in 2002 to provide telecommunications support to more rurally located health clinics and medical personnel so that they and their patients could communicate with specialists and hospitals about their patients' cases. The former director, Keith Williams, was indicted for theft over \$60,000 a class B felony carrying a sentence range of 8 to 30 years and up to \$25,000 fine and the former assistant director, Paul Monroe, was indicted for theft over \$10,000 - \$60,000 a class C felony carrying a sentence range of 3 to 15 years and up to \$10,000 fine.

General Johnson predicated a TBI investigation into this matter in September 2010 after learning of the allegations of improper use of CHN funds from CHN's Nashville-based legal counsel. The State Comptroller's Office was also brought in to perform an investigative audit on CNH's activities since they receive federal grants that 'pass through' or are administered by the State of Tennessee. The audit revealed mismanagement by Williams and Monroe of over \$1.2 million in grant funds and specifically targeted the two with awarding themselves bonuses of over \$80,000 and \$10,000, respectively. (See Comptroller's Investigative Audit dated July 7, 2011 on their website).

CHN was operated from a Kingston, Tennessee address even though it provided services throughout the State of Tennessee.

The state prosecution in this case focused on the unauthorized bonuses. Johnson indicated that federal authorities (the FBI and Health and Human Services) are looking into potential prosecution for the misuse of grant funds and other charges. "We had been waiting on the feds to take the entire case since they have more severe sentencing penalties, but that has not yet happened, so we went ahead and proceeded on the bonuses where we felt like there was clearly the intent to commit a theft. The feds can still proceed on the remainder or all aspects of the case as dual prosecution is permitted," Johnson explained.

These are ‘new bill’ indictments meaning that these defendants have not been previously charged and arrested on warrants through the general sessions court level. Their case was presented directly to the grand jury by the Comptroller’s investigative auditor and a *capias* has been issued on each individual for their arrests. Keith Williams previously lived in Franklin, Tennessee, but his last known address was in Florida. Paul Monroe is a Roane County resident.

End of release – contact Angie Vittatoe at 865 376-2145 or asvittatoe@tndagc.org or visit our website for this and other press releases at www.9thDAG.com.