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Las Vegas, NV – VDA OC LLC, a health care staffing company, pleaded guilty and was sentenced for entering into and engaging in a conspiracy with a competitor to allocate employee nurses and to fix the wages of those nurses on Oct. 27.

During the alleged conspiracy, from about October 2016 until July 2017, VDA, then known as Advantage On Call, LLC, was one of two primary providers of contract nursing services to the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nev.

According to the plea agreement it entered into with the government, VDA, through one of its employees, participated in a conspiracy with another contract health care staffing firm to suppress and eliminate competition by agreeing to allocate nurses and fix the wages of those nurses. At the same hearing during which VDA pleaded guilty, U.S. District Court Judge Richard F. Boulware II sentenced VDA to pay a criminal fine of $62,000 and restitution of $72,000 to victim nurses.

U.S. Asssistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, said that free and open labor markets are a "cornerstone of the American dream."

[The] guilty plea demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that workers receive competitive wages and a fair chance to pursue better work and that criminals who conspire to deprive them of those rights are held accountable," Kanter said. "The court's sentence will compensate the hardworking health care workers who were victims of this crime."

U.S. Attorney Jason M. Frierson for the District of Nevada, said that protecting workers from antitrust schemes such as wage-fixing and employee allocation, was a priority for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

"We are committed to working with the Antitrust Division and FBI to prosecute anticompetitive conduct that affects opportunities for workers and the labor market," Frierson said.

"The defendant conspired with a competitor to fix wages and undercut the salaries of school nurses," Louis Quesada, Assistant Director of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division, said. "Everyone, especially those responsible for keeping our children healthy and safe, deserves the opportunity to compete for employment in a fair marketplace."

The announcement is the result of a federal investigation being conducted by the Antitrust Division's San Francisco Office and the FBI's International Corruption Unit, with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Nevada.

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