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A Florida investigation into a \$3 million Medicaid fraud scheme surrounding an Orlando woman and her mental-health service business has led to the arrests of several of her employees, who are accused of double-billing and taking kickbacks.

Janie Vittini, owner of Improving Together Inc., was arrested in March and accused of billing the Medicaid program for hundreds of services never rendered.

Authorities said Vittini used the money to fund a lavish lifestyle — living in a posh downtown condo, buying homes and several vehicles, and purchasing thousands of dollars in luxury items.

Case records recently released by the Attorney General's Office said Vittini agreed to cooperate with investigators, plead guilty to fraud charges and abandon roughly \$1 million in seized assets.

Vittini told investigators several of her employees at the Winter Park-area business were in on the scheme, and they were recently arrested for their suspected roles: Stephanie Morales, Joycelyn Carmichael Hills and Jeanette Paneto.

Improving Together was supposed to help guide people through mental-health-service programs. Court records show Vittini billed Medicaid for people to whom she had never provided services.

From January 2012 to March 2013, more than \$3 million was deposited from the Florida Medicaid program to bank accounts associated with Vittini and Improving Together, court records said.

During that time, Vittini made more than \$600,000 in purchases using her debit

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Authorities say Paneto — who also worked full-time at the Children's Home Society — was paid \$87,000 from Improving Together and double-billed. Vittini said she paid Paneto bonuses for fraudulent billing.

In one instance, records state, Paneto claimed to have performed 30 hours of case-management services in a single day.

Hills, who also worked full-time for the Children's Home Society, referred clients who were Medicaid recipients to Improving Together. Vittini said Hills received kickbacks from these referrals.

Investigators also determined Improving Together billed for services never rendered to Hills' two children.

Morales, who is a realtor and full-time student, received \$37,000 and "lavish gifts" from Vittini.

The charging of these three employees with organized fraud follows the prior arrests of Vittini and her friend and employee, Laiza Carlo.

Authorities said Carlo received nearly \$68,000 from Vittini, who also paid for her friend to take a cruise in March.

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