

L.A. longshoreman sentenced to 41 months for bilking union healthcare plan



A San Pedro dockworker has been sentenced to 41 months in federal prison after being convicted of bilking a union healthcare plan out of more than \$200,000. (Bob Chamberlin / Los Angeles Times)



By **James Rufus Koren**

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A San Pedro dockworker who was convicted last year of bilking a union healthcare plan out of more than \$200,000 has been sentenced to more than three years in federal prison.

David Gomez, 53, a member of the [International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 13](#), will serve a 41-month sentence and was also ordered to pay \$201,000 in restitution to the healthcare plan run by the union and shipping trade group Pacific Maritime Assn.

The sentence was handed down last week in federal court in Los Angeles.

Gomez and another ILWU member, Sergio Amador, opened medical and chiropractic clinics in San Pedro and Long Beach under the name Port Medical. They encouraged fellow union members to frequent the clinics by paying them incentives, including cash and sponsorships of basketball and softball teams, federal prosecutors said.

The clinics also encouraged workers to get unnecessary massages and chiropractic treatments, and submitted falsified documents to the union healthcare plan, indicating that treatments were not only necessary but that patients visited more often than they actually did, according to an indictment filed in late 2015.

In all, prosecutors said the clinics submitted at least \$258,913 in fraudulent bills to the union healthcare plan, and the plan paid out at least \$228,440.

Gomez was convicted by a jury in October and sentenced on Jan. 9. Prosecutors had sought a sentence of at least 51 months, but Gomez's attorney argued for a shorter sentence, noting that Gomez had no prior criminal history.

Amador pleaded guilty to criminal mail fraud charges in April and is scheduled to be sentenced this spring.

The case against Gomez and Amador was the result of an investigation by the Department of Labor and the FBI.

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