Fraudulent Nursing Diploma Scheme Leads to Federal Charges



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On January 25, 2023, the U.S. Department of Justice, partnering with various law enforcement agencies, charged 25 individuals from New Jersey, New York, Florida, Texas, and Delaware, with allegedly selling fake nursing diplomas and transcripts to aspiring nurses. The enforcement action was called Operation Nightingale.

The enforcement action targeted fake diplomas sold to aspiring nurses who then were qualified to take the national nursing board exam. Upon passing the exam, these aspiring nurses obtained licensure as registered nurses or licensed practical/vocational nurses and eventually were employed and practiced nursing without the necessary education or clinical training. More than 7,600 fake nursing degrees were issued to aspiring nurses from three Florida-based schools, Siena College, Palm Beach School of Nursing, and Sacred Heart International Institute. While these schools are now closed, the DOJ, OIG, and FBI are jointly working to identify nurses who improperly obtained these degrees and licenses and are now working in healthcare facilities. New Jersey is among the states where law enforcement is investigating and annulling nursing licenses obtained as a part of this scheme.

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