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## Deerfield woman sentenced in ID theft, tax fraud case

July 31, 2013 | By Melhor Leonor, Sun Sentinel

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A former patient scheduler at [Boca Raton Regional Hospital](#) has been sentenced to a year and half in prison after pleading guilty to stealing the identity of patients and benefiting from fraudulent tax returns.

In addition to the prison term, Shalamar Major, 32, of Deerfield Beach, on Monday was sentenced to three years of probation, and must pay \$200 in fines and \$15,795 in restitution.



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Major pleaded guilty in May to stealing patients' names, Social Security numbers and dates of birth and passing these on to a friend, Tanisha Wright, 27, who would then file taxes and collect tax returns.

Between January and June 2012, Wright used some of the information provided by Major to file at least 57 fraudulent tax returns, of which the IRS paid 32 for a total of \$174,130, court documents show.

The women planned to split the money, which was deposited in stolen reloadable debit cards.

Major was convicted on one count of unauthorized disclosures and one count of conspiracy to commit false claims. She had faced a maximum sentence of 10 years in jail for each count.

Wright, who was sentenced earlier this month, will spend three years and four months in prison, with \$174,130 in restitution.

Many of the victims targeted by Wright and Major were elderly patients, prosecutors said.

According to 2012 figures from the Federal Trade Commission, 36 percent of identity theft complaints came from people age 50 and over.

"They seem like easy targets to criminals because they aren't using their credit actively, often have money in their accounts and aren't actively getting loans," said Denise Richardson, an identity theft risk-management specialist based in Hollywood. "When senior citizens find out about these, they also struggle with who to contact and what to do."

She said people should be vigilant about safeguarding their personal information and also said to file taxes early.

"Be proactive instead of reactive," she said. "The sooner that you file your taxes, the less time these guys have to file a fraudulent one."

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