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## DHS suspends 2 companies involved in bribery case

By Chad Day [twitter](#)

This article was published today at 7:09 p.m.

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The Arkansas Department of Human Services on Tuesday suspended two companies from the state's Medicaid program, a day after the agency identified the owner of the companies as a person accused in federal court papers of bribing the department's former deputy director.

Trinity Behavioral Health Care, an inpatient mental health facility for youths in Warm Springs, and Maxus, Inc., which provides outpatient behavioral health services for youths and adults throughout the state, were notified of the suspension in separate letters that cited a "credible allegation of fraud."

Trinity provides care for about 80 to 90 Medicaid beneficiaries, and Maxus, which operates under the name Arkansas Counseling Associates, provides outpatient care for about 2,500 program beneficiaries.

Both companies are owned by Ted Suhl, a businessman that DHS identified Monday as the person accused in federal court documents of bribing its former deputy director Steven Jones with cash in exchange for official assistance.

Jones, 49, on Thursday pleaded guilty to conspiracy and bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported Friday.

Jones was deputy director of the Human Services Department from 2007 until mid-2013.

Suhl has denied any wrongdoing, and on Tuesday, he indicated through his attorney that he will appeal the suspensions.

Attorney Michael Scotti said his client disagrees with the agency's decision and believes it should have left the youths and adults in the hands of the companies where they are currently receiving care.

"At no time has there been any finding or indication that there's been any lack of care that's been provided either by Trinity or Arkansas Counseling," Scotti said, noting that the allegations that resulted in the suspensions appear to be "thin."

Read Wednesday's *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* for more on this story.

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