

Wealthy Couple Pleads Guilty to Fraud

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By Matt Collette, Globe Correspondent - May 18, 2009

A wealthy Brookline couple that swindled taxpayer-funded health insurance for their family while owning millions in real estate and operating three doughnut shops will have to repay the state and pay hefty fines under a plea deal yesterday.

Joseph Youshaei and his wife Jila, who are worth an estimated \$2 million, claimed to have an income only of \$475 per week, which allowed them to obtain \$53,000 in MassHealth benefits over the past six years. Both pleaded guilty to procurement fraud and larceny over \$250 in Suffolk Superior Court yesterday.

Joseph Youshaei, 46, was sentenced to one year in jail but will only have to serve 30 days. The balance of the sentence was suspended.

Jila Youshaei, 41, was put on one-year probation. The couple will have to repay \$53,000 to the state and each was fined \$17,500.

State Auditor Joseph DeNucci, whose office investigated the case said: "This is truly an unbelievable example of fraud. A wealthy family that could afford to pay for its own health insurance took money from a taxpayer-funded program meant to help those people who are truly needy."

While they were collecting health care from 1999 to 2005, the couple lived in a \$650,000 home in Brookline and owned several downtown buildings worth "millions," including the Boston Discount Jewelry Exchange in Downtown Crossing. The couple also owned three Honey Dew doughnut shops, a convenience store and fruit stand, Attorney General Martha Coakley said.

Authorities said the couple also had all three of their children enrolled in an exclusive Brookline private school.