

Dominican national sentenced for stealing \$29,800 in MassHealth, SNAP benefits

A Dominican national was sentenced Thursday in federal court in Boston in connection with making fraudulent statements on a passport application and an application for MassHealth benefits.

Hidel Romero Sanchez, 42, a Dominican national residing in Dorchester, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper to time served (approximately 14 months in prison), 18 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay forfeiture and restitution of \$26,000 to MassHealth and \$3,800 to Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. In January 2020, Romero Sanchez pleaded guilty to making a false statement on a passport application and a false statement on an application for MassHealth benefits.

Romero Sanchez admitted to using the identification of a U.S. citizen to obtain a Connecticut driver's license, a U.S. passport, MassHealth benefits, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and subsidized housing benefits. He also admitted to using this false identity in employment documents, including when submitting a criminal record check form for a job at a local children's hospital, and thus hiding prior cocaine trafficking charges that were pending under his true name.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Michael Shea, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Abely of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case. Fraudulently Applying for Passport and MassHealth Benefits.