

# Record-Journal

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## State recovers \$43M in Medicaid fraud pay

By Paul Hughes  
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — At least \$43.4 million in fraudulent Medicaid payments were made in Connecticut between fiscal years 2021 and 2025, the state Division of Criminal Justice recently reported to a legislative committee.

The Division of Criminal Justice informed the Appropriations

Committee in a follow-up report to its budget presentation for the upcoming 2027 fiscal year that the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit opened 260 cases between the 2021 and 2025 fiscal years, made 41 arrests and secured 37 convictions.

The largest amount for Medicaid recoveries reported during that five-year period was \$16.2 million in the 2023 fiscal year, and the 65 cases opened that

year also represented a five-year high. The dozen convictions recorded in the 2024 fiscal year represented the most during that five-year period. The 2021 and 2025 fiscal years tied for most annual arrests, with 10 for each year.

Medicaid is a joint state-federal program that helps pay for free or low-cost health care for seniors, low-income households, people with disabilities

and pregnant women. More than 68.8 million people were enrolled in Medicaid nationally in late 2025, according to the latest available federal figures, and another 7.2 million were enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Types of Medicaid fraud that can take place include billing for treatment, medical procedures or equipment that is not actually performed or provided, double

billing the Medicaid program and private insurance for the same service, and billing for services that are not medically required.

Other fraudulent practices involve "up-coding" when a health care provider bills for a more expensive procedure or service than was actually performed or provided, or filling a prescription with a generic drug

*Fraud continues on A9*

### THE USS HARVEY C. BARNUM JR.

## 'Man our ship and bring her to life!'



Associated Press

**U.S. Marine Col. Harvey C. Barnum Jr. wearing his Medal of Honor, which he earned as a young lieutenant in Vietnam in December 1965.**

Navy warship named for Cheshire native, Medal of Honor recipient to be commissioned

By Jesse Leavenworth  
STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Navy announced Thursday that a new warship named for Cheshire native and Medal of Honor recipient Col. Harvey C. Barnum Jr. will be commissioned in April.

The USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr., an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, is to be commissioned on April 11 in Norfolk, Va. Barnum, 85, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War who now lives in Virginia, said Thursday that he will be there.

"It's a phenomenal honor," he said. "It doesn't get any better than that."

Barnum graduated in 1958 from Cheshire High School, where he was class president in both his freshman and senior years.

One of two sons, his mother was a homemaker and his father was a construction company manager and Cheshire building inspector.



Neil Boorjian/U.S. Navy

**The USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr., a guided missile destroyer named for a Connecticut Medal of Honor recipient, is set to be commissioned in Norfolk, Va., on April 11.**

At St. Anselm College in New Hampshire, he completed an officer training program and was commissioned a Marine 2nd lieutenant. Trained as a forward artillery observer, he was sent to Vietnam at the end of 1965 and assigned to Company H, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Hotel Company was the rear security unit on Dec. 18 after the rest of the battalion moved through the village of Ky Phu in Quang Tin Province. The Medal of Honor citation tells what happened next. It reads, in part:

When the company was suddenly pinned down by a hail of extremely accurate

enemy fire and was quickly separated from the remainder of the battalion by over 500 meters of open and fire-swept ground and casualties mounted rapidly, Lt. Barnum quickly made a hazardous reconnaissance of the area, seeking targets for his artillery. Finding the rifle company com-

*Ship continues on A7*

## Connecticut lawmakers pitch \$100M to \$150M in property tax grants to aid municipalities, schools

By Natasha Sokoloff  
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — Connecticut House Democrats announced a plan Monday that aims to ease the property tax burden on towns and cities struggling to fund their local school systems.

Boosting dollars for schools has emerged as a priority this legislative session, and underlying the various proposals introduced so far is the acknowledgment that without an additional state investment in education funding, municipalities will be forced to raise property taxes or reduce

support for local school districts. During a press conference at the Legislative Office Building, House Democratic leaders introduced a plan to address both of those issues by sending money to municipalities so that school districts can avoid painful cuts and local residents won't have to pay

higher property taxes. The proposal would provide about \$100 million to \$150 million in grant funding to municipalities in fiscal year 2027, said Speaker of the House Matt Ritter, D-Hartford.

The money would come out of a \$500 million fund that Gov. Ned

*Grants continues on A9*

### SOUTHTONING

## Foundation pays mortgage for fallen trooper's family

By Sandra Diamond Fox  
STAFF WRITER

SOUTHTONING — The Tunnel to Towers Foundation has paid the full mortgage for the family of fallen First Class state Trooper Aaron Pelletier, the foundation said in a statement.

On May 30, 2024, Pelletier, 34, was struck and killed on Interstate 84 East while conducting a traffic stop in Southington. He



Pelletier

was a nine-year veteran of the state police and leaves his wife, Dominique Pelletier, and two young sons, the statement said. "Aaron was a first responder, husband, and a father, and the center of his family's world. He put on the uniform to protect others, but his greatest

pride was being there for his boys. By paying off this mortgage, we're protecting his family the way he protected all of us," said Tunnel to Towers Chairman and CEO Frank Siller in the statement.

Pelletier was driving east on I-84 in Southington, looking for traffic violators through a "high visibility motor vehicle enforcement" grant to reduce deadly crashes when he spotted some-

one who wasn't wearing a seat-belt, state police said.

He pulled the person over and was outside of his patrol car, talking to the driver, when a red pickup sideswiped his cruiser and struck him, police said. The man who struck him, Alex Oyola-Sanchez, was later sentenced to 18 years in prison after pleading guilty to first-degree manslaughter.

*Mortgage continues on A7*

## Sweetened beverage tax could pay for free meals at schools

By Jordan Nathaniel Fenster  
STAFF WRITER

A proposal to create a tax on sweetened beverages that would then be turned around to fund free meals at public schools across Connecticut drew plenty of testimony at the state Capitol in Hartford Monday, most opposed to the concept. While many spoke out against the proposal, most did not necessarily oppose the goal of the measure.

"This is one of those topics where I think we can all agree that the goal, the end goal, is

*Tax continues on A9*



**Weather:** Partly sunny and chilly. High: 39. Low: 23.

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