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◆ The HHS Office of Inspector General has updated its work plan, which is its road map of audits and evaluations. Visit <https://go.usa.gov/xmTDM>

◆ Sixty people, including 31 doctors, seven pharmacists and eight nurse practitioners, were arrested in the Appalachian Regional Prescription Opioid Surge Takedown, the Department of Justice, HHS Office of Inspector General and other state and federal law enforcement agencies said April 17. The people were arrested for allegedly participating in the illegal prescription and distribution of opioids and other narcotics and in health fraud schemes. The case involves more than 350,000 prescriptions and 32 million pills in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Alabama, and Tennessee; 24,000 patients received prescriptions from the medical professionals who were charged, DOJ said. For example, 15 people were charged in the western district of Tennessee, including eight physicians and other medical professionals. One of them is a nurse practitioner who called himself the “Rock Doc” and allegedly prescribed “powerful and dangerous combinations of opioids and benzodiazepines, sometimes in exchange for sexual favors,” DOJ said. Five people were charged in the eastern district of Kentucky, including a dentist who allegedly wrote opioid prescriptions without a legitimate medical purpose, extracted teeth unnecessarily, scheduled unnecessary follow-up appointments and billed improperly for services, DOJ said. Visit <http://bit.ly/2VdZkvI>

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