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◆ **The former CEO of Putnam County Memorial Hospital in Unionville, Missouri, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud, the Department of Justice said Oct. 29.** David Lane Byrns also will forfeit \$5.1 million. According to his guilty plea, Byrns and another person took control of the rural hospital through a management agreement with its board. “Byrns and others, including a laboratory owner, then arranged for urine drug tests (UDTs) and blood tests to be performed on a massive scale at diagnostic testing laboratories outside Missouri, on behalf of individuals who were not Putnam patients and who otherwise had no connection to Putnam,” DOJ said. “To obtain samples for testing, Byrns and his co-conspirators entered into arrangements with marketers, who solicited samples from substance abuse treatment centers, sober living homes, physicians’ offices and other sources throughout the United States, in exchange for a portion of the insurance reimbursements.” Tests often weren’t medically necessary, and they were billed to Missouri Medicaid and private insurers using Putnam’s in-network contracts, which yielded more favorable reimbursement rates. The payers forked over about \$114 million to Putnam over 15 months, most of which was split among Byrns and his co-conspirators, DOJ said. <http://bit.ly/34mVtxb>.

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