Arizona senator blasts alleged Medicaid fraud at hearing

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By Chris Woodward | The Center Square contributor October 1, 2025

(The Center Square) – Arizona state Sen. Carine Werner, R-District 4, continues to investigate billions of dollars of alleged Medicaid fraud.

The Arizona Senate Committee on Health & Human Services held a hearing Wednesday afternoon on the fraud reportedly draining taxpayer dollars and resulting in Arizonans being left without health care.

Werner chairs the committee.

“It is our duty to demand transparency, accountability and integrity in our health care system so that public resources are protected and every Arizonan has the opportunity to receive the care they need,” Werner said during the hearing.

Testimony was given by various people including trafficking victims, people who lost coverage and Native Americans.

Racquel Moody of the White Mountain Apache Tribe went to a place offering what it called sober living and treatment, but Moody told Werner and others that she found it to be the opposite.

“People were drinking, staff allowed it, and when I spoke up, I was told I didn’t belong,” said Moody. “I wanted sobriety, but instead I kept getting placed in environments of drinking and chaos, from one house to another. It was all the same things.”

Moody said that in December 2022, she was “kicked out of one of the homes.” She then found it difficult to find another place suitable for her needs.

“Everywhere it was the same story: fraud and neglect,” said Moody.

Prior to Wednesday’s **meeting**, the Arizona Senate Committee on Health & Human Services held a **hearing** in August that discussed nearly $2.8 billion lost to various fraud schemes while more than 140,000 people were dis-enrolled from Medicaid.

Werner called that hearing a turning point.

“We confronted the staggering scale of fraud that infiltrated Arizona’s behavioral health system and harmed our most vulnerable Arizonans, and it eroded the public’s trust,” said Werner on Wednesday. “Serious gaps in oversight and inadequate interagency communication created conditions where bad actors could exploit access, systematically traffic both Native Americans and non-native individuals suffering from substance abuse disorders, and treat them as cattle rather than human beings.”

Werner went on to say that fraud has evolved.

“Patient brokers have now begun removing access members from the vital Medicaid coverage and shifting them to federally subsidized ACA market plans, further taking advantage of those most in need and steering them to those who are willing to buy and sell patients in violation of Arizona law,” said Werner.

Werner added that the patients were people, human beings and citizens, with lives and families. **Werner** called on the committee to “do something in their memory.”

Wednesday’s **hearing** was available for streaming through the Arizona Legislature’s website.