

DOJ Reports Sentencing of Two Physicians to Prison for Prescription Fraud

Richard P. Kusserow | August 5, 2021

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) [announced](#) that two Arkansas physicians were sentenced to a combined 12 and a half years in federal prison. One of the physicians pleaded guilty to dispensing a Schedule II controlled substance without a legitimate medical purpose and thereby causing the death of an individual. The physician, who was sentenced to 10 years in prison and three years of supervised release, prescribed approximately 1,156,044 dosage units of Schedule II controlled substances to 347 patients (or an average of 3,332 pills per patient) over the course of two years. Ninety-eight percent of the physician's patients were prescribed at least one opioid (such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, or methadone), and 94 percent received either multiple narcotics or a combination of narcotics and sedatives. While the physician pleaded guilty in one death, the DOJ notes that several of his other patients died of drug overdose or related causes.

A second physician was sentenced to two and a half years in federal prison and three years of supervised release for distribution of a controlled substance without an effective prescription. During an investigation into fraudulently written and filled prescriptions, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) discovered that the prescriptions were for Schedule II opioid medications. The physician wrote one of the prescriptions while meeting with the patient in the parking lot of a restaurant. The prescription was not written in conjunction with an appropriate medical examination and therefore was issued outside the course of a legitimate medical practice.

The second physician's prosecution is connected to the DOJ's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), whose principal mission is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and those primarily responsible for the nation's illicit drug supply.

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