



Department of Justice

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MORE CHARGES AGAINST DOCTOR FOR ILLEGAL DRUG DISTRIBUTION

New Indictment Charges Dr. Astin With 175 Counts of Illegal Prescriptions

Atlanta, Georgia--Dr. PHILLIP C. ASTIN, III, 52, of Carrollton, Georgia, has been indicted by a federal grand jury on additional charges relating to overprescribing prescription drugs.

David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, said, "Since the initial indictment in this case, investigators have carefully reviewed hundreds of patient files and interviewed dozens of witnesses, and we now see a much broader picture of the disturbing and dangerous distribution of prescription drugs. The superseding indictment alleges that Dr. Astin illegally distributed prescription drugs in many ways to many patients, whether by providing multiple, undated prescriptions for the same drug on the same day, writing prescriptions for inappropriate combinations of drugs, or feeding the methadone addictions of patients for months or even years."

"Addressing the problem of the diversion and abuse of controlled pharmaceuticals continues to be a top priority for DEA," said Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division. "The diversion of these drugs through doctor shopping, improper prescribing and rogue internet pharmacies continue to be a major concern. We want to make it clear that these additional charges are the direct result of the dedicated efforts of our federal, state and local law enforcement counterparts."

ASTIN was initially charged in July 2007 in a federal criminal complaint and then a seven-count indictment for illegal distribution of prescription drugs, including Percocet, Adderall, Lorcet, and Xanax, to two patients. Just prior to those federal charges, DEA agents and officers from the Fayette and Carroll County Sheriff's Offices had executed search warrants at his medical office.

The new indictment includes the charges alleged in the first indictment and adds more than 150 counts relating to 17 additional patients, who are alleged to have received hundreds of illegal prescriptions for methadone, Percocet, Oxycontin, Demerol, Lorcet,

Ritalin, Vicodin, Xanax, Adderall, and Soma. The indictment also alleges that the prescription drugs dispensed by ASTIN resulted in death or serious bodily injury to one patient. Finally, the indictment alleges that ASTIN wrote and filled 16 prescriptions for Lortab, Xanax, Dexedrine, Adderall, and Ritalin in the names of two patients without their knowledge. Under federal law, each allegedly illegal prescription is charged as a separate count.

Federal law requires medical practitioners to sign and date each prescription for controlled substances on the date that it is issued.

According to Nahmias, although the superseding indictment identifies prescriptions written to many more patients than identified in the initial indictment, the investigation remains ongoing. Nahmias encouraged anyone who possesses information regarding illegal prescribing by ASTIN to contact DEA at 404-893-7000.

This case is being investigated by Diversion Investigators of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Fayette County Sheriff Department's Drug Suppression Task Force, with the assistance of the West Georgia Drug Task Force, and the Carroll County Sheriff's Department.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys John Horn and Jeffrey Davis.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.