



U.S. Department of Justice

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Event: Indictment

Defendant: Sohrab Shafinia et al

OAKLAND COUNTY DOCTOR AND PHARMACIST INDICTED

Farmington doctor Sohrab Shafinia, D.O., 48 of Keego Harbor, Michigan and pharmacist Richard Riozzi, 41 of St. Clair Shores, Michigan, were indicted by a federal grand jury in Detroit along with Stuart Stein, 55, Randell McDaniel, 49, and Gerald Richards, 36, all from Monroe, Michigan, on charges of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance and to distribute a controlled substance, and distribution of a controlled substance - aiding and abetting, Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Robert L. Corso, DEA Special Agent in Charge, and Andrew G. Arena, FBI Special Agent in Charge.

The 43-count indictment charges that between 2005 and 2007, Dr. Shafinia a doctor of osteopathy licensed to practice by the State of Michigan met, on various occasions, with Stuart Stein, Randell McDaniel and Gerald Richards at his medical office(s) and other times at different locations such as parking lots and restaurants in and around Oakland County for the purpose of writing prescriptions for OxyContin™, Lorcet™, Lortab™, Xanax™ and Soma™ in exchange for cash payment. Dr. Shafinia allowed Stein, McDaniel and Richards to bring

additional “patients” to him or the names of patients for whom he would prescribe the same drugs in exchange for cash. Dr. Shafinia referred the prescription recipients to SafeScript Pharmacy in Farmington Hills, where Richard Riozzi, a pharmacist licensed by the State of Michigan, worked as a full time pharmacist. Riozzi filled numerous prescriptions issued by Dr. Shafinia, notwithstanding the facts that the customers often came in groups, traveled from outside of metropolitan Detroit, paid cash for their prescriptions and received the exact same combination of drugs in most instances.

In addition, from February 2007 through May of 2007, Riozzi filled prescriptions for methadone and oxycodone presented by another customer not associated with Dr. Shafinia, which were presented in the names of dozens of other individuals. That customer never brought any of the individuals in whose names he filled prescriptions to the pharmacy; he paid for the prescriptions with tens of thousands of dollars in cash; and he paid Riozzi a separate “tip” in cash for filling the prescriptions.

Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg said , "The abuse and addiction to prescription drugs is a growing problem in this country. It is unconscionable for medical professionals to contribute to the improper use of these drugs. I commend the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their efforts in making our communities safer from the dangers of the illegal distribution of prescription drugs."

Robert L. Corso, DEA Special Agent in Charge, said, “The arrests today are just one example of DEA's determination to combat the troubling prescription drug abuse problem in this country. Dr. Shafinia and pharmacist Riozzi abused their positions of trust and jeopardized the lives of many individuals by illegally distributing more than a million dosage units of controlled substances throughout southeast Michigan and beyond. This conspiracy to divert medicine into the illegal market is every bit as dangerous, if not more so, than cocaine and heroin dealers on our streets. These arrests have put a large dent into the illegal diversion of prescription drugs and should serve as a warning that the DEA and our law enforcement partners will continue to pursue those that are illegally diverting prescription drugs into our communities.”

Andrew G. Arena, FBI Special Agent in Charge said, “Health care fraud and drug diversion are very real and serious problems in the United States. Many believe these to be victimless crimes, however, the victims are the individuals addicted to the controlled

substances and the public who has to pay for it.”

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case was investigated by special agents of the DEA and FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Dawkins Davis.