



Department of Justice

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DOCTOR CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL DRUG DISTRIBUTION

Dr. Astin Allegedly Provided Over A Million Doses of Prescription Drugs and Steroids In Two Year Period

Atlanta, Georgia - Dr. PHILLIPPE C. ASTIN, III, 52, of Carrollton, Georgia, has been indicted by a federal grand jury for illegal distribution of prescription drugs, including Percocet, Adderall, Lorcet, and Xanax, outside the usual scope of medical practice and not for legitimate medical purposes. ASTIN was charged today in a seven-count criminal indictment and made his initial appearance this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Linda T. Walker. Astin was initially charged in a federal criminal complaint issued last Friday, after DEA agents and officers from the Fayette and Carroll County Sheriff's Offices executed search warrants at his medical office last week.

David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, said, "Prescription drugs are controlled substances because if they are abused, they can cause serious addiction, illness, or even death. Dr. Astin allegedly prescribed such drugs like candy, with little regard for appropriate medical practice or the recipients' health. Dirty doctors should be on notice that they face federal prosecution and prison time as we work with the DEA and other law enforcement partners to protect the health and safety of our communities."

"Addressing the problem of the diversion and abuse of controlled pharmaceuticals is a top priority for DEA," said Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division. "I would like to add that the purchase of steroids and other performance enhancing drugs over the internet continues to be a major issue. An internet search of steroids and pharmaceutical products over the internet both yield over 2 million hits. The diversion of these drugs through doctor shopping, improper prescribing and rogue internet pharmacies continues to be a major concern. We want to make it clear that through our investigative techniques, those held responsible for the distribution of such products will ultimately be brought to justice."

According to Nahmias, documents and information presented in court: The indictment charges that ASTIN prescribed several prescription drugs, which are

controlled substances, including Percocet (oxycodone), Adderall (amphetamine), Lorcet (hydrocodone), and Xanax (alprazolam), to two patients who are not identified by name. For one patient, the prescriptions began in April of 2004 and continued for more than a year. The indictment identifies seven dates on which the prescriptions were issued to the two patients. According to the indictment, these patients received multiple prescriptions for the drugs, all on the same date, even though some of the prescriptions were undated. 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 indictment identifies prescriptions written on only seven dates to two patients, the investigation is ongoing and additional charges are possible after agents and prosecutors review the evidence, including voluminous documents obtained in the searches. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of all proceeds from and property used to commit or facilitate the alleged crimes.

Last Wednesday and Friday, DEA and local law enforcement officers searched Dr. ASTIN's medical office, located at 702 Dixie Street, Carrollton, Georgia. Agents also searched ASTIN's mother's residence, located at 532 Cedar Street, Carrollton, Georgia. DR. PHIL ASTIN III is registered with the DEA under the provisions of the Controlled Substance Act, to handle and prescribe schedule II through V controlled substances. Dr. ASTIN is registered at his office address.

On June 25, 2007, local authorities discovered the deceased body of one of ASTIN's patients, Chris Benoit, at Benoit's home located in Fayetteville, Georgia. The deceased bodies of Benoit's wife and child were also found at the home. DEA Diversion indices, as well as evidence found at the crime scene by the Fayette County Sheriff's Office, identified Dr. ASTIN as the supplier of various pharmaceutical controlled substances, including injectable anabolic steroids, found in Mr. Benoit's residence. Through prescription records for Mr. Benoit maintained at a pharmacy in Fayetteville, Georgia, Dr. ASTIN was identified as prescribing, on average, a 10-month supply of anabolic steroids to Mr. Benoit every three to four weeks from May 4, 2006 through May 9, 2007.

While executing a state search warrant at Dr. ASTIN's medical office on June 27, 2007, agents and officers seized copies of prescriptions written by Dr. ASTIN for Testosterone, Xanax, Adderall, Concerta, Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, and Soma, which were consistent, in terms of quantities, dosages, and frequencies of the prescriptions, with illegal prescription drug abuse. Multiple undated copies of prescriptions for controlled substances were also found in various medical records.

A preliminary review of Dr. ASTIN'S prescription writing activity showed that he authorized approximately one million dosage units of various pharmaceutical controlled

substances in the last two years. The prescriptions also included significant quantities of injectable Testosterone cypionate, an anabolic steroid.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents 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. Assistance has also been provided by the office of Scott L. Ballard, District Attorney, Griffin Judicial Circuit, and the office of Pete Skandalakis, District Attorney, Coweta Judicial Circuit.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys John Horn and Carol Kayser.

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.