

PRESS RELEASE

Suburban Chicago Physician Sentenced to Federal Prison for Prescribing Opioids Without a Medical Exam

Monday, July 17, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Illinois

CHICAGO — A suburban Chicago physician has been sentenced to a federal prison term for prescribing opioids to patients without a medical examination and then billing Medicare for the purported treatment.

ELIZA DIACONESCU, 74, of Lake Forest, Ill., pleaded guilty earlier this year to a federal health care fraud charge. U.S. District Judge Steven C. Seeger on Wednesday sentenced Diaconescu to six months in federal prison and ordered her to pay \$84,031 in restitution to Medicare.

Diaconescu admitted in a plea agreement that from 2016 to 2021, she pre-signed prescriptions for hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl for patients of her pain clinic in Gurnee, Ill., so that the prescriptions could be provided to patients when Diaconescu was not at the clinic. Diaconescu and others at the clinic created false paperwork indicating that Diaconescu had face-to-face exams with the patients, when, in fact, the patients had only come to pick up the pre-signed prescriptions and had not visited with Diaconescu. Diaconescu then knowingly submitted false claims seeking reimbursement from Medicare for the purported exams, knowing that such exams did not occur.

The sentence was announced by Morris Pasqual, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Robert W. "Wes" Wheeler, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI, Sheila G. Lyons, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Division of the DEA, Mario Pinto, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, and Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

The case was brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office's Opioid Task Force, which was formed in 2019 for the purpose of combatting the unlawful distributions of controlled substances.

"The defendant's fraudulent conduct was a gross abuse of the trust that Medicare places on medical providers to accurately bill for the work they have done," Assistant U.S.

Attorney Jared Hasten argued in the government's sentencing memorandum. "All of the money paid by Medicare should have gone towards providing medical services to beneficiaries."

Updated July 17, 2023