

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Oklahoma

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Doctor Pleads Guilty to Accepting Illegal Kickback Payment in Return for Writing Prescriptions for Compounded Drugs

A doctor licensed in the states of Oklahoma and Texas pleaded guilty Wednesday for writing and referring compounded drug prescriptions in return for illegal kickback payments, announced U.S. Attorney Clint Johnson.

Jerry May Keepers, 68, of Kingwood, Texas, pleaded guilty to one count of *soliciting and receiving health care kickback*. Keepers violated the federal anti-kickback statute when he accepted the illegal payment.

If the plea agreement is accepted by U.S. District Judge Claire V. Eagan, Keepers will serve 36 months of supervised probation and pay no more than \$1,518,180.46 in restitution. Judge Eagan will sentence Keepers on May 10, 2022.

In the plea agreement, Keepers admitted that OK Compounding solicited him to write prescriptions for his patients that would be filled by the pharmacy. OK Compounding was a pharmacy controlled by Christopher Parks and Dr. Gary Lee, who are also defendants in the case.

Specifically, on January 22, 2014, Keepers knowingly received \$25,000 from representatives of OK Compounding. The purpose of the payment was to induce Keepers to refer prescriptions for expensive compounded drugs to the pharmacy. The compounded medications were filled, and claims were filed by the pharmacy. Those medications were in turn paid for by federal healthcare programs, including TRICARE, Medicare, CHAMPVA, and the Federal Employees Compensation Act Program.

According to the superseding indictment filed in the case, kickback payments were disguised through various sham business arrangements, including contracts where several physicians purported to serve as "medical directors" or "consulting physicians" for the pharmacy. Keepers and OK Compounding represented that Keepers had been paid for his services as a national spokesperson, medical director or national marketing director.

It is illegal to pay or receive "kickbacks" in conjunction with federal health care insurance. Prohibitions against kickbacks are crucial to ensure that financial motives do not undermine the medical judgment of physicians and other health care providers.

Keepers ran a pain clinic practice in the cities of Friendswood, Beaumont and Humble, Texas, and established a clinic in Tulsa in November 2012.

The Department of Labor- Office of Inspector General (OIG), IRS - Criminal Investigation, U.S. Postal Service- OIG, Department of Veterans Affairs- OIG, FBI, the Department of Health and Human Services-OIG, and Defense Criminal Investigative Service conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Melody Noble Nelson and Richard M. Cella are prosecuting the cases.

Topic(s):

Health Care Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Oklahoma, Northern

Contact:

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