

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of West Virginia

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, August 24, 2019

## **Charleston Doctor Pleads Guilty to Illegal Distribution of Methadone**

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A Charleston doctor who practiced at Neurology & Pain Center, PLLC pled guilty to illegal distribution of controlled substances that were not for legitimate medical purposes, announced United States Attorney Mike Stuart. Muhammed Samer Nasher-Alneam admitted to writing prescriptions in July 2014 for oxycodone and methadone pills that were not within the bounds of professional medical practice or for legitimate medical purposes. Pursuant to his guilty plea, Nasher agreed to permanently surrender both his medical license and DEA registration. He further agreed to never seek reinstatement of a license to practice as a medical doctor in any other state.

“Nasher is now an admitted felon and faces up to ten years - TEN YEARS- in a federal prison. A drug dealer in a lab coat is still just a drug dealer,” said United States Attorney Mike Stuart. “Nasher will never practice medicine again. Ever. Nasher will never write another prescription. Ever. And Nasher will never treat another patient. Ever. We’re cracking down hard across the board - medical professionals, doctors, pharmacists, street dealers and traffickers – in a multi-pronged aggressive approach intended to cut the head off the snake. Medical professionals should take note that if they abuse the prescribing privileges of their profession, and I stress that they are a privilege, my office will prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law and I will seek the maximum sentence in every case.”

Nasher was remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal pending his December 2, 2019 sentencing. Nasher has remained in custody since his arrest on July 27, 2018 - 393 days – as a result of the United States moving to detain him. He faces at least 5 and up to 10 years in prison, as well as a \$1 million fine at sentencing. As part of his plea agreement, Nasher agreed to forfeit \$149,480.75 in United States Currency and an Acura RDX Sport Utility Vehicle.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Inspector General, the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, the West Virginia State Police and the West Virginia Insurance Commission conducted the investigation. Senior United States District Judge David A. Faber presided over the hearing. Assistant United States Attorneys Alan McGonigal, Jennifer Herral and Steve Loew, and former Assistant United States Attorneys C. Haley Bunn and Meredith Thomas handled the prosecution.

This case was prosecuted by the Opioid Fraud and Abuse Detection Unit (OFADU), a Department of Justice initiative that uses data to identify and prosecute individuals that are contributors to the national opioid crisis. The Southern District of West Virginia is one of 12 districts nationally to participate in the pilot program.

The OFADU falls under the Appalachian Regional Opioid (ARPO) Strike Force which is made up of prosecutors and data analysts with the HCF Unit, prosecutors with the ten U.S. Attorney's Offices in the region and special agents with the FBI, HHS-OIG and DEA. The ARPO Strike Force operates out of two hubs based in the Cincinnati, Ohio/Northern Kentucky and Nashville, Tennessee areas,

supporting the ten districts that make up the ARPO Strike Force region. In addition, the APRO Strike Force works closely with other state and federal law enforcement agencies, including State Medicaid Fraud Control Units.

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