



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of Maryland*

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**July 31, 2008**

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**CONTACT AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or  
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**PHARMACY OWNERS CONVICTED OF ILLEGALLY SELLING 10 MILLION  
HYDROCODONE PILLS OVER THE INTERNET, LAUNDERING \$20 MILLION IN  
PROCEEDS AND FAILING TO PAY TAXES**

*U.S. Attorney Warns that Abuse of Prescription Drugs Can Cause Addiction, Injury or Death*

**Baltimore**, Maryland – A federal jury today convicted Steven Abiodun Sodipo, age 51, of Forest Hill, Maryland and Callixtus Onigbo Nwaehiri, age 49, of Jarrettsville, Maryland of illegally selling 9,936,075 pills or dosage units of hydrocodone over the Internet, conspiracy to launder money, engaging in monetary transactions using the proceeds of the illegal drug sales and filing false tax returns, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, “Prescription drug abuse is a growing crisis in Maryland and throughout the nation, and it is one of our most important drug enforcement challenges. Many people wrongly assume that prescription drugs are safe. The truth is that using any drugs without proper medical supervision can result in addiction, injury or death.”

“This investigation sends an instant message to ‘cybercriminals’ that the Internet is not their safe house,” stated Carl J. Kotowski, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Baltimore District Office. “Whether the battle is on the street or on the Web, the outcome remains the same: DEA along with the combined efforts of law enforcement agencies in an investigation of this magnitude produced a formidable force against narcotics trafficking and money laundering. Individuals and businesses utilizing the Internet to sell pharmaceuticals are bound by the same laws and regulations that apply to the corner drug store,” according to Kotowski.

“IRS-Criminal Investigation is committed to targeting the untaxed underground drug economy to put those taxes back into the American economy. This untaxed underground economy poses a threat to our voluntary tax compliance system and undermines the overall public confidence in our American system of taxation” said C. Andre’ Martin, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation.

According to testimony presented during the six week trial, Sodipo and Nwaehiri owned and operated NewCare Home Health Services, Inc., which did business under the name of NewCare Pharmacy. Beginning no later than sometime in 2004 through October 10, 2006, Sodipo and Nwaehiri joined a nationwide conspiracy to illegally sell hydrocodone through the

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Witnesses testified that Sodipo and Nwaehiri knew that 88% of all “prescriptions” filled by NewCare were for hydrocodone, that most prescriptions were issued by doctors located in Florida, that the patients were in all 50 states and D.C., and that there was no doctor patient relationship. From January 1, 2005 through October 10, 2006, NewCare purchased 9.9 million dosage units of hydrocodone, when the national average was under 160,000 units per pharmacy. Hydrocodone is a dangerous and highly addictive narcotic painkiller.

Moreover, the evidence showed that Sodipo and Nwaehiri continued to sell vast quantities of hydrocodone knowing that some of their customers were addicts.

According to trial testimony, Sodipo and Nwaehiri engaged in monetary transactions with criminally derived proceeds from the illegal sale of hydrocodone, depositing their checks into a NewCare bank account. Sodipo and Nwaehiri filed false individual tax returns in 2005, understating the income that they received.

The Government is still seeking the forfeiture of \$20 million, the amount of gross proceeds derived from the illegal sale of over nine million dosage units of hydrocodone from January 2005 to October 2006, the NewCare property located at 3423-25 Sinclair Lane, Baltimore as well as the contents of the businesses; the homes, bank accounts and motor vehicles of defendants Sodipo and Nwaehiri.

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Moreover, the evidence showed that Sodipo and Nwaehiri continued to sell vast quantities of hydrocodone knowing that some of their customers were addicts.

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