

# NEWS

---

United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
402 East State Street, Room 430  
Trenton, New Jersey 08608

---

---



---

---

***Ralph J. Marra, Jr., Acting U.S. Attorney***

---

---

***More Information?*** Contact the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

***News on the Internet:*** News Releases, related documents and advisories are posted short-term at our website, along with links to our archived releases at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. ***Go to: <http://www.njusao.org/break.html>***

---

---

Assistant U.S. Attorney  
PETER N. KATZ  
609-989-0565

benk0108.rel  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Jan 8, 2009

---

---

## Pharmacy Technician Sentenced to 12 Months in Prison for Distribution of Oxycodone

---

---

(More)

---

---

Greg Reinert, PAO  
Public Affairs Office

856-757-5233  
973-645-2888

**Breaking News (NJ) <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>**

---

---

TRENTON – A pharmacy technician formerly employed at Community Medical Center in Toms River was sentenced today to 12 months in federal prison for illegally distributing oxycodone, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Mary L. Cooper also ordered Alicia Benko, 22, of Toms River, to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of her prison term. Judge Cooper continued Benko's release on a \$50,000 bond pending her surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on a date to be determined by prison authorities.

Benko was initially arrested on April 8, 2008, by Special Agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Benko pleaded guilty before Judge Cooper on Sept. 26, 2008, to a one-count Information charging her with distribution and possession with intent to distribute oxycodone.

At her plea hearing, Benko admitted that on several occasions she sold a quantity of oxycodone to another individual, who turned out to be an undercover law enforcement officer.

Benko stated that while employed at Community Medical Center ("CMC") she worked with fellow pharmacy technician George Palias. On at least three occasions, Benko received oxycodone from Palias, with the intention of providing the oxycodone to another individual, she admitted. On three occasions during December 2007 and January 2008, Benko provided a quantity of oxycodone to the undercover law enforcement officer in exchange for a sum of money and then gave a portion of the proceeds to Palias.

On June 9, 2008, Palias, 28, of Toms River, was arrested on a criminal Complaint that charges him with distribution and possession with intent to distribute oxycodone. He is currently free on a \$50,000 bond pending trial.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Cooper consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents with the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, in Newark, with the investigation of the case.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter N. Katz, of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Trenton.

– end –

Defense Attorney: David Schafer, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender