



## U. S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney  
Northern District of Illinois

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Patrick J. Fitzgerald  
United States Attorney

Federal Building  
219 South Dearborn Street, Fifth Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 353-5300

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PRESS CONTACTS:  
AUSA Matthew Schneider (312)886-0973  
Randall Samborn (312)353-5318

### **TINLEY PARK COUPLE INDICTED FOR ALLEGEDLY ILLEGALLY DISPENSING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES TO PATIENTS AT SOUTH SUBURBAN WEIGHT LOSS CENTERS; CHEATING IRS OF NEARLY \$750,000 IN TAXES**

HAMMOND, Ind. — The owner of a weight loss clinic with three locations in northwest Indiana and south suburban Chicago and his wife were indicted for allegedly illegally dispensing amphetamine-based controlled substances to patients and engaging in illegal monetary transactions and tax fraud. The defendants, **Rakesh Anand** and **Meena Anand**, were charged in 35-count indictment returned yesterday by a federal grand jury in Hammond, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced today. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago is handling the prosecution in the Northern District of Indiana.

Rakesh Anand, 55, and Meena Anand, 51, of Tinley Park, will be arraigned at a date still to be determined in Federal Court in Hammond. Rakesh Anand, who owned and operated Doctors Weight Loss Centers in Merrillville, Ind., and Lansing and Orland Park in Illinois, was charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, six counts of distributing controlled substances, 20 counts of illegally structuring monetary transactions to avoid currency transaction reports, three counts of money laundering, one count of conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service, and four counts of tax fraud. Meena Anand, who assisted her husband in operating the

centers and managed the locations in Lansing and Orland Park, faces all of the same charges except the six counts of distributing controlled substances.

The indictment also seeks forfeiture of approximately \$6.3 million, including more than \$3.6 million that has been frozen by the government in numerous bank and brokerage accounts, as well as more than \$700,000 in cash that was seized from the Anands' home in May 2010.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Food and Drug Administration and the Indiana State Police.

The tax charges allege that Anands substantially under-reported their income on their federal income tax returns for 2005-2008 and, as a result, failed to pay approximately \$745,280 in taxes owed to the IRS.

Between 2002 and February 2010, the drug distribution and conspiracy charges allege that the Anands illegally dispensed amphetamine-based Phendimetrazine and Phentermine to patients without a physician performing a physical examination or any medical tests, and without reviewing patients' records, obtaining a thorough medical history, or providing any subsequent monitoring. The couple allegedly offered discounts to patients who purchased two or three months supply of the pills with cash or a credit card. The indictment states that a physician may not prescribe these controlled substances for weight reduction or to control obesity without performing the required medical services and protocols, including assuring that patients first attempt to diet and exercise.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew Schneider, Diane Berkowitz and Orest Szewciw.

The charges in the indictment carry the following maximum penalties on each count: conspiracy to distribute controlled substances — 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine; distribution of controlled substances — five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine (except one of these six counts

carries a maximum 10-year term and a \$500,000 fine); illegally structuring monetary transactions — 10 years and a \$500,000 fine; money laundering — 10 years and a \$250,000 fine; and tax fraud conspiracy and tax evasion — five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, and restitution is mandatory. In addition, defendants convicted of tax offenses face mandatory costs of prosecution and remain civilly liable to the Government for any and all back taxes, as well as a civil fraud penalty of 75 percent of the underpayment plus interest. If convicted, however, the Court would determine a reasonable sentence to impose under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

An indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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