

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Bloomfield Physician Sentenced to 132 Months in
Federal Prison for Drug Conspiracy

(More)

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NEWARK – A Bloomfield physician was sentenced to 132 months in federal prison today for conspiring to distribute thousands of OxyContin and Percocet pills, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Stanley R. Chesler, who presided over the four-week trial, also ordered Joan Jaszczult, 46, to pay a fine of \$12,500 and serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of her prison term. Judge Chesler remanded the defendant to the custody of the U.S. Marshal to begin serving her sentence.

On Sept. 17, 2007, after three hours of deliberations, a jury convicted Jaszczult of one count each of conspiracy to distribute oxycodone and distribution of oxycodone.

In convicting Jaszczult, the jury found that Jaszczult conspired to distribute oxycodone, the main ingredient in narcotic painkillers such as OxyContin and Percocet, with co-conspirators who bought prescriptions from her and subsequently distributed the pills on the streets of northern New Jersey. The jury also found that Jaszczult illegally distributed oxycodone on June 30, 2005, when she wrote and sold a Percocet prescription to a cooperating government witness in the name of someone whom she had never met and who was not a patient of hers.

Jaszczult was arrested on Sept. 20, 2005, by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the two-count Indictment.

In addition to Jaszczult, 29 individuals were arrested in a long-running undercover operation code-named “PILL COLLECTOR.” All of the defendants pleaded guilty prior to trial except for Jaszczult and Joseph A. Bruzzi, Jr., 33, of Lyndhurst, who pleaded guilty during the trial.

The drug distribution count on which Jaszczult was convicted related to Jaszczult’s acceptance of cash payments in her Bloomfield office in exchange for writing 1,499 prescriptions for OxyContin as well as for other oxycodone-based narcotics such as Percocet. Co-conspirators were able to obtain the prescriptions from Jaszczult in their names for non-existent medical conditions. They were also able to obtain them in the names of individuals whom Jaszczult had never examined, diagnosed, treated, or otherwise met. In order to avoid detection, the cash paying “patients” utilized a large number of national and independently owned pharmacies to fill the illegally obtained prescriptions. Once in possession of the actual pills, the “patients” would sell them, for huge profits, to middlemen who would then further distribute them for additional profits.

The substantive count on which Jaszczult was convicted related to Jaszczult’s sale of a Percocet prescription to the confidential informant.

Christie credited Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in

Charge Gerard P. McAleer, and the FBI, under the direction of Weysan Dun, with the investigation that led to Jaszczult's conviction.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jonathan W. Romankow and R. Joseph Gribko.

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Defense Counsel: Edward Bilinkas, Esq., Randolph
Angelo Bianchi, Esq., Bloomfield