



# Department of Justice

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Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2010  
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## **PHARMACIST CHARGED WITH UNLAWFULLY DISTRIBUTING AND DISPENSING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

COLUMBUS – A federal grand jury here has charged Harold Eugene Fletcher, 42, owner of the East Main Street Pharmacy in Columbus, in a 227-count indictment alleging that he filled prescriptions he knew were not issued in the usual course of professional practice or for a legitimate medical purpose. The charges involve drugs commonly used to treat pain.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Anthony C. Marotta, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Columbus (DEA), and Jose Gonzalez, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), announced the indictment returned today.

The indictment also charges Fletcher with financial crimes including money laundering and structuring.

Fletcher, a registered pharmacist, owned and operated the East Main Street Pharmacy at 1336 East Main Street in Columbus.

The indictment charges Fletcher with conspiring with Dr. Paul Volkman, a physician charged in a separate case, and others, between September 2005 and February 2006 to knowingly and intentionally conspire to distribute, dispense and possess with intent to dispense oxycodone, hydrocodone, alprazolam and diazepam. Under federal law, the drugs are controlled substances used in the treatment of chronic pain. Conspiracy is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment.

The indictment charges Fletcher with seven counts of possession with intent to distribute Schedule II controlled substances, and 92 counts of distribution of Schedule II controlled substances. Each count is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment.

It also charges Fletcher with seven counts of possession with intent to distribute Schedule III controlled substances and 29 counts of distribution of Schedule III controlled substances. Each count is punishable by up to five years imprisonment.

The indictment also charges Fletcher with seven counts of possession with intent to distribute Schedule IV controlled substances and 55 counts of distribution of Schedule IV controlled substances. Each count is punishable by up to three years imprisonment.

The indictment alleges Fletcher committed 28 crimes of money laundering, alleging that he deposited funds received from an illegal activity into bank accounts in attempts to conceal the source of the funds. The indictment also charges Fletcher with one count of structuring, which is breaking a large deposit into several smaller ones in order to evade U.S. Treasury Department rules that require reporting cash deposits of \$10,000 or more.

Twenty-six of the money laundering charges are punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment. Two are punishable by up to ten years imprisonment. Structuring is punishable by up to five years imprisonment.

The indictment seeks forfeiture of real estate and the contents of an investment account as proceeds of illegal activities.

U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson will preside over the case. An initial appearance for Fletcher will be scheduled.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by IRS and DEA agents and diversion investigators, along with Assistant U.S. Attorneys David J. Bosley and Michael Marous, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys Segev Phillips and Brad Tammaro with Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray's Office, who are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent and the burden remains on the Government to prove in court the defendant is guilty of the crimes alleged in the indictment.

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