

U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE:

Davie Pill Mill Owner Pleads Guilty

*Defendant Owned and Operated Six Area Pain Management Clinics that
Dispensed Oxycodone, Profited More than \$22 Million*

Wifredo A. Ferrer, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Mark R. Trouville, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Miami Field Division, and José A. Gonzalez, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division (IRS-CID), Miami Field Office, announced that **Vincent Colangelo**, 43, of Davie, pleaded guilty earlier today to conspiracy to distribute and dispense large amounts of oxycodone without a legitimate medical purpose and outside the usual course of professional practice. Colangelo also pleaded guilty to money laundering and filing a false 2009 federal income tax return. Sentencing has been scheduled for June 20, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. before U.S. District Judge Marcia G. Cooke.

As set forth in court documents, Colangelo owned and operated six pain management clinics and a pharmacy in Broward and Miami-Dade counties between October 2008 and February 23, 2011. Colangelo and his co-conspirators were responsible for dispensing more than 660,000 dosage units of oxycodone in excess of 1.4 million milligrams and prescribing significantly more oxycodone filled by outside pharmacies to patients throughout Florida and other states. Colangelo mass marketed his pain clinics through the use of more than 1,600 Internet sites. Immediate cash payment was required for access to “doctor visits,” prescriptions filled and for a service referred to as “VIP,” which enabled patients to bypass hours of waiting and long patient lines for an express visit with the pain doctor. He also directed the patients to obtain MRIs that he and his co-conspirators knew to be inferior in that they were over-aggressively interpreted. Colangelo falsified and directed his employees to falsify patients’ urine tests, which together with the bogus MRIs, justified the large amount of oxycodone prescribed by the clinics’ doctors. Colangelo advertised for doctors on Craigslist and hired only doctors who agreed to prescribe maximum amounts of highly addictive pain killers and other medications to patients. Colangelo and other drug dealers sponsored patients at his clinics by paying their expenses in exchange for most, if not all, of their oxycodone prescriptions which could be sold on the street at a substantial profit.

U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer stated, “The guilty pleas entered into by Colangelo and his co-conspirators mark a significant first step in Operation Snake Oil. Together with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, we will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute pill mills and rogue pain clinics whose practice has led to the prescription drug abuse epidemic and deaths in our community.”

DEA Special Agent in Charge Mark R. Trouville stated, “Due to investigations like this and new laws, South Florida has witnessed a dramatic decline in oxycodone and how oxycodone is dispensed. Mr. Colangelo’s conviction sends a loud and clear message that DEA continues its effort to end this epidemic in Florida.”

IRS Special Agent in Charge José A. Gonzalez stated, “This investigation has shown that there will be serious consequences for those who seek to profit from the illicit trade of prescription drugs. IRS Special Agents will continue to follow the money to dismantle the financial backbone of illegal organizations and to seize the profits of their illegal activities. IRS agents will also ensure that profits whether legally or illegally derived are properly reported to the IRS.”

At sentencing, Colangelo faces a maximum penalty of twenty years in federal prison on the drug conspiracy charge. He also faces maximum penalties of twenty years on the money laundering charge and three years on the tax charge. According to the terms of the plea agreement, Colangelo has agreed to forfeit five (5) properties valued at more than \$5 million, approximately \$911,951 in cash seized by the IRS from seven bank accounts and a safety deposit box, 52 vehicles and vessels worth more than \$6 million and jewelry valued at approximately \$20,000, all representing the amount of proceeds he had obtained and laundered as a result of his participation in the drug conspiracy.

Mr. Ferrer thanked the DEA, IRS-CID, and the Broward Sheriff’s Office, as well as the many other state and local agencies for their investigative work. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Behnke and Tax Division Trial Attorney Greg Tortella.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.