

## Press Release

### Davie Pill Mill Owner Sentenced in Operation Snake Oil

---

June 29, 2012

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*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 today's sentencing of **Vincent Colangelo**, 44, of Davie, for his role in a large-scale conspiracy involving the illegal distribution of prescription pain medication and related criminal offenses between October 2008 and February 23, 2011.*

*Colangelo pled guilty on April 2, 2012, 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 pled guilty to money laundering and filing a false 2009 federal income tax return. U.S. District Judge Marcia G. Cooke sentenced Colangelo to twenty (20) years in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release. In addition, Colangelo was ordered to forfeit five (5) properties valued at more than \$2.5 million, approximately \$911,951 seized 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.*

*The charges arose from Operation Snake Oil, an undercover DEA investigation that began in approximately September 2009. Previously sentenced for their roles in the drug conspiracy by U.S. District Judge Marcia G. Cooke were: **Wayne Richards** to 20 months in prison; **Nicholaus Thomas** and **Rachael Bass** to 120 months and 50 months in prison, respectively; and **Michael Plesak** to 60 months in prison. Two remaining co-defendants are awaiting sentencing.*

*U.S. Attorney Wifredo A. Ferrer stated, "Pill mill owners and operators, like Vincent Colangelo, churn out prescription pain killers without regard to the safety and well-being of our community. One by one, however, we are shutting down these unscrupulous clinic owners and operators. Through operations like Snake Oil, Pill Nation, Oxy Alley, Gotham and other prosecutions, we are making a positive difference, but we are not done. We will continue to investigate and prosecute owners, operators, doctors, and pharmacies who seek to hide behind a medical license to push deadly drugs in our community."*

*DEA Special Agent in Charge Mark R. Trouville stated, "DEA's mission to prevent the illegal distribution of prescription drugs will continue. Today's sentencing of Mr. Colangelo sends out a loud and clear message that we will not tolerate these types of crimes. The DEA and our counterparts will remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure that these medicines get into the hands of legitimate patients and not in the pockets of greedy drug traffickers."*

*IRS Special Agent in Charge José A. Gonzalez stated, "Today, justice is served, as Mr. Colangelo is being held accountable for his criminal actions. IRS Criminal Investigation is proud to provide its financial expertise as we work with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners to prosecute individuals who promote illegal schemes and put lives at risk. Our agents will continue to follow the money to ensure that all proceeds derived from the illegal activities are forfeited to the U.S. government."*

*According to 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 amounts greater than 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 more than 1,600 Internet sites. Immediate cash payment was required for access to "doctor visits," the filling of prescriptions, and for "VIP" service, which enabled patients to bypass hours of waiting and long lines for an express visit with the pain doctor. Colangelo also directed the patients to obtain MRIs that he and his co-conspirators knew misrepresented or overstated the alleged condition and source of pain in the patients' backs or necks. Colangelo falsified and directed his employees to falsify patients' urine tests, which together with the false MRIs, attempted to justify 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 oxycodone and Xanax to patients. Colangelo and his co-conspirators paid "doctor shoppers" to obtain bogus MRIs and to secure prescriptions for excessive amounts of oxycodone from doctors at Colangelo's pain clinics. The oxycodone obtained from Colangelo's clinics was sold on the street and shipped outside the State of Florida at a substantial profit.*

*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. Attorneys Scott Behnke and Roger Powell 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 <http://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 <http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov> or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.*

*Technical comments about this website can be e-mailed to the [Webmaster](#). PLEASE NOTE: The United States Attorney's Office does not respond to non-technical inquiries made to this website. If you wish to make a request for information, you may contact our office at 305-961-9001, or you may send a written inquiry to the United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of Florida, 99 NE 4th Street, Miami, Fl. 33132.*