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PRESS RELEASE

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/index.html>

D.C. Doctor Arrested for Unlawfully Distributing Opioids

WASHINGTON - A District of Columbia doctor made an initial appearance today in U.S. District Court on charges related to his alleged unlawful distribution of opioids in exchange for cash. Ndubuisi Joseph Okafor, M.D., 63, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland was arrested yesterday at his medical practice on 16 counts of illegal distribution of opioids.

The charges were announced by U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves, FBI Assistant Director David Sundberg of the Washington Field Office, Special Agent in Charge Maureen R. Dixon, of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, Daniel W. Lucas, Inspector General for the District of Columbia, and Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget of the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) Washington Division.

According to court documents, Okafor allegedly distributed oxycodone to individuals outside the usual course of professional practice and without a legitimate medical purpose from his medical practice in Washington, D.C. Okafor allegedly performed only cursory evaluations of individuals, and further solicited and received cash inside the examination rooms of his clinic in exchange for opioid prescriptions.

If convicted, Okafor faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on each count.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Meredith Mayer-Dempsey of the District of Columbia's United States Attorney's Office and Principal Assistant Deputy Chief Kilby Macfadden of the Justice Department's Fraud Section.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, and the DC-Office of Inspector General Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU). The Drug Enforcement Administration Washington Division provided valuable assistance and served an Immediate Suspension Order (ISO) on Dr.

Okafor's DEA registration because it was determined that he posed an imminent danger to public health and safety due to the volume of unlawful distribution of opioids.

The Fraud Section leads the New England Prescription Opioid (NEPO) Strike Force. Since its inception in late 2018, the NEPO and the Appalachian Regional Prescription Opioid (ARPO) Strike Force and has partnered with federal and state law enforcement agencies and U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout New England and Appalachia to prosecute medical professionals and others involved in the illegal prescription and distribution of opioids. Over the past four years, NEPO and ARPO have charged over 115 defendants, collectively responsible for issuing prescriptions for over 115 million controlled substance dosage units. As a result, to date, more than 70 defendants have been convicted. More information can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-fraud/health-care-fraud-unit>.

Information about available treatment programs is available as follows:

Maryland: Patients receiving care from this practice that wish to obtain information on how to find treatment for mental and substance use disorders, where to access naloxone and other harm reduction services, and information about crisis helplines can utilize these Maryland resources:

- Search for substance use treatment facilities through <https://findtreatment.gov/>
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org, a Maryland suicide and behavioral health crisis hotline.
- Naloxone: Public Overdose Response Programs in Maryland supply naloxone and may be found using this list.

You can also visit <https://health.maryland.gov/pha/NALOXONE/Pages/Home.aspx> to see a locator map. Naloxone may also be found in your local pharmacy and billed to insurance and Medicaid.

District of Columbia residents needing information about mental health or substance use disorder services, please call the Department of Behavioral Health 24/7 Access Helpline 1-888-793-4357 or visit www.dbh.dc.gov.

In addition, those needing access to opioid treatment service can contact, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 24/7 National Helpline for referrals to treatment services at 1-800-662-4359.

Medications obtained illicitly are very dangerous as they are often not what they appear, and frequently contain contaminants and extremely potent substances such as fentanyl that greatly increase the risk of overdose and death.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.