

Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York

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Gramercy Physician, Dr. Hector Castro, Sentenced for Multiple Counts of Criminal Sale of a Prescription for a Controlled Substance

Dr. HECTOR CASTRO, a Manhattan physician who specialized in internal medicine, was sentenced today to five years and six months in prison, followed by two years post-release supervision, following his conviction in May on 39 counts of Criminal Sale of a Prescription for a Controlled Substance. The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor filed an indictment against Castro following a 15-month long investigation, which was supervised by the Office's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit. The sentence was imposed by Judge Kirke Bartley in Manhattan Supreme Court, who also presided over the three week long trial.

On May 28, 2015, a state court jury found CASTRO guilty on all 39 counts of Criminal Sale of a Prescription for a Controlled Substance. Evidence presented at trial demonstrated that CASTRO, founder and medical director of Itzamna Medical Center, located at 205 East 16th Street in the Gramercy section of Manhattan, illegally sold prescriptions for the potent painkiller oxycodone for \$125 each. The proof included videos of Castro sitting in his private office, counting and pocketing cash handed across his desk, in exchange for written prescriptions for the highly addictive narcotic drug oxycodone, conducting no medical examination and delivering no treatment.

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, issued the following statement on the sentencing:

"Today's sentence appropriately punishes Hector Castro for the devastating consequences of his abuse of his medical license and prescribing privileges. Hector Castro demonstrated repeatedly that his exclusive concern was for making a fast buck. To him, a pad of 100 prescriptions represented \$12,500 in untaxed income. He had no regard for his obligations as a physician, or the health and well-being of the 'patients' who testified at his trial. His conduct led directly to the addiction of some who obtained pills from him, and contributed to the epidemic of addiction and escalating overdose deaths in our region."

Special Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan commended Prescription Drug Investigation Unit Chief Ryan Sakacs, Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Linehan, Supervising Investigator Joseph Hall and all of the staff members who worked on the investigation and trial. The prosecution team included additional Assistant District Attorneys, other members of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office Investigators Squad, and skilled analysts, paralegals, and technicians.

The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor thanks the following agencies for their participation: the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE) of the New York State Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, the DEA's New England Division, the Cape Cod Resident Office, the Woodbridge Township Police Department and the Union County Prosecutor's Office, both in New Jersey.