



Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York
Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

For Immediate Release
November 19, 2021

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Brooklyn Pharmacist Pleads Guilty to Using Forged Rx's to Obtain Oxycodone Pills for Illegal Resale

A supervising pharmacist at a Gravesend, Brooklyn pharmacy was arrested this morning for allegedly using forged prescriptions to obtain oxycodone pills for illegal resale, and falsifying prescription data reported to New York State. ANTHONY C. PANICCIOLI entered a plea of guilty to Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree in Manhattan Criminal Court. Under the terms of his plea, PANICCIOLI is required to forfeit his pharmacist license.

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Keith Kruskall, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, and Joshua Vinciguerra, Director of the New York State Department of Health's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, announced the arrest and plea today.

The investigation was conducted by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit and Investigators Unit, DEA New York's Diversion Group D-61 and the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE).

A criminal complaint filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor charged PANICCIOLI with 10 counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, 10 counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and eight counts of Offering a False Instrument in the First Degree.

PANICCIOLI came under law enforcement scrutiny on August 14, 2019, when a BNE investigator paid an official visit to the Brooklyn pharmacy, located at 2272 McDonald Avenue, as part of an investigation into the diversion of prescription opioid medication. During that visit, PANICCIOLI provided the investigator with approximately 270 prescriptions for oxycodone 30 mg that contained several indicators of forgery.

Among several indications of forgery, the phrase "Official New York State Prescription," which appears at the top of all New York State prescriptions, contained a misspelling of the word "prescription." Additionally, some prescription numbers contained handwritten digits and/or excessive digits. Records show nearly all of the prescriptions were paid for in cash, rather than with insurance. The 270 allegedly forged prescriptions yielded approximately 46,650 pills.

The investigation revealed the pharmacy had reported at least eight of these alleged forgeries as legitimate prescriptions through the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) maintained by BNE between June 4, 2018 and March 4, 2019.

Additionally, at least 28 prescriptions recovered from the pharmacy bore the name of a particular doctor who signed an affirmation stating he did not write those prescriptions.

Investigators with the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office, DEA New York's Diversion Group D-61 and BNE conducted a court-authorized search of the pharmacy on November 19, 2020 and recovered a computer. Court-authorized examination of the computer by a Special Narcotics digital forensic analyst showed that the user identification login used for the submission of BNE data for oxycodone 30 mg pills from January 2017 through July 2019 allegedly belonged to the defendant.

A review of prescription and controlled substance ordering data, maintained by BNE and DEA respectively, showed a significant discrepancy in oxycodone stock beginning in 2017. Approximately 50,000 pills of oxycodone ordered from distributors between 2017 and 2019 were unaccounted for in prescription data.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and commended SNP's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, Investigators Unit and Digital Forensics Unit, DEA New York Diversion Group D-61 and New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "Addictive pills on the black market contribute to the overdose crisis we see today. We will vigorously investigate and prosecute medical professionals who attempt to cash in on their access to addictive medications, jeopardizing the health and well-being of communities they are supposed to serve."

"The blatantly fraudulent prescriptions utilized by this defendant helped fuel the ongoing opioid crisis in New York City," said DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Keith Kruskall. "With drug overdose deaths at an all-time high, this pharmacist's disregard for the safety of our communities was an egregious affront to his profession. I commend the DEA Diversion Investigators, the Special Narcotics Investigators and the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement for their hard work in this investigation."

Director of the New York State Department of Health's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement Joshua Vinciguerra said, "We appreciate every opportunity to work with our partners in the federal government and in New York City to combat the serious problem of drug diversion that is only helping to fuel the opioid epidemic. This arrest should serve as a reminder that fraud and diversion are criminal behaviors New York will not tolerate."

Defendant

Conviction

Anthony C. Paniccioli
Staten Island, NY
Age: 74

Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled
Substance 3rd

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.