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SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Georgia

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Monday, December 6, 2021

Savannah woman pleads guilty to laundering 'pill mill' money**Doctor at 'pill mill' already sentenced to 20 years in federal prison**

SAVANNAH, GA: A former Garden City, Ga., clinic owner and CEO has admitted to laundering money in connection with a notorious "pill mill" doctor who illegally dispensed massive amounts of controlled substances.

Jamesetta Whipple-Duncan, 58, of Savannah, pled guilty in U.S. District Court to one count of Money Laundering, said David H. Estes, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. Whipple-Duncan was set to go to trial the week following her plea of guilty.

"Those who fuel the opioid addiction crisis, either through illegally dispensing drugs or providing financial support for their criminal activities, will be identified and held accountable," said U.S. Attorney Estes. "We will continue to collaborate with our law enforcement partners to shut down those whose activities endanger our communities."

As described in the plea agreement and other court documents, Whipple, as owner of the now-closed Georgia Laboratory Diagnostics LLC, in Garden City, Ga., was an employer of **Dr. Frank Bynes Jr.**, 69, of Savannah. Bynes was sentenced in February 2020 to 240 months in prison and ordered to pay \$615,145 in restitution to Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare after being found guilty by a federal jury on 13 counts of Unlawful Dispensation of Controlled Substances and three counts of Health Care Fraud.

For Whipple-Duncan's role, she profited as her clinic provided Bynes with a base of operation from which he illegally distributed controlled substances, including highly addictive opioids and drug cocktails favored by addicts.

"The dispensing of addictive prescription pain medication (oftentimes opiate-based) under the guise of a doctor's care was not about the good of the community or an individual's specific health needs; it was about greed of a clinic owner and CEO," said the Special Agent in Charge of the DEA's Atlanta Field Division Robert J. Murphy. "This owner admitted her wrong-doings and will now have to pay for her unlawful acts. DEA and its law enforcement partners will continue to rid our communities of unlawful clinic owners whose criminal acts fuel the raging opioid epidemic."

"Whipple-Duncan profited significantly from this clinic. Her greedy actions directly contributed to the opioid addiction crisis in our community and for that she will be punished," said Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. "This guilty plea sends a strong message that the FBI and our law enforcement partners will actively pursue and prosecute anyone who tries to profit off the illegal distribution of opioids."

"Jamesetta Whipple-Duncan directly profited from the pain Dr. Frank Bynes caused to the community," said Derrick L. Jackson, Special Agent in Charge for the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Ms. Whipple-Duncan's prosecution should serve as an example that those who fraudulently profit at the expense of society's most vulnerable will not go unpunished."

"Our military and their families, at times seeking pain relief from an injury, have been substantially impacted from the opioid epidemic in our nation," stated Special Agent in Charge Cynthia A. Bruce, Department of Defense Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS), Southeast Field Office. "DCIS will continue to work with our investigative counterparts and the Justice Department to prosecute those who seek to profit from the illegal distribution of opiates that drive addiction without regard for the patient."

The case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, the FBI, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and an investigator with the U.S. Attorney's Office. Whipple-Duncan is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jonathan A. Porter and Patrick J. Schwedler.

Topic(s):
Drug Trafficking
Opioids
Prescription Drugs

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

USAO - Georgia, Southern

Contact:

Barry L. Paschal, Public Affairs Officer: 912-652-4422

Press Release Number:

189-21

Updated December 6, 2021