

Lawsuits: Six former Warren pain clinic doctors over-prescribed pain killers

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Six physicians at a former Warren pain clinic who already face federal criminal allegations have been sued by 39 former patients who claim negligence by excessively prescribing pain medications.

The lawsuits were filed Wednesday by attorney Brian McKeen at Macomb County Circuit Court in Mount Clemens on behalf of the patients and their families.

Named in the lawsuits are the same physicians named in federal indictments a year ago: clinic owner Rajendra Bothra, 78, of Bloomfield Hills, as well as physicians Eric Backos, 66, of Bloomfield Hills; Ganiu Edu, 51, of Southfield; David Lewis, 42, of Detroit; Christopher Russo, 51 of Birmingham; and Ronald Kufner, 69, of Ada.

The doctors practiced out of offices at Pain Center USA, aka Interventional Pain Center, on Van Dyke Avenue north of Interstate 696, and in a building at Kelly and Nine Mile roads in Eastpointe.

They were shut down by federal authorities a year ago the same day the doctors were accused in a 56-count indictment of over-prescribing opioids in an illicit \$464 million health care fraud scheme. The doctors were accused of billing insurance companies for the maximum number of services and procedures possible with no regard to the patients' needs, according to U.S. Attorneys.

The lawsuits allege pain patients being prescribed excessive amounts of pain medications including opiates, narcotics and benzodiazepines and undergoing unnecessary regular and numerous treatments such as steroid injections, nerve blocks and radiofrequency ablations that sometimes resulted in nerve and tissue damage.

“Dr. Bothra and his colleagues made themselves rich on the pain of their patients and treated them with unnecessary procedures and highly addictive drugs with absolute disregard for their health and welfare,” McKeen said. “In many instances there were engaged in negligent behavior fueled by greed and not what’s in the best interest of the patient.”

The actions by the doctors resulted in patients suffering physically, emotionally, financially and socially, McKeen stated.

The plaintiffs reside throughout the metro Detroit area, he said.

The indictment said the illicit behavior took place from in 2013 until November 2018.

The doctors prescribed more than 13.2 million doses of opioids, including oxycodone, oxymorphone, hydrocodone and hydromorphone, the feds said. Brand names include Vicodin, Oxycontin, Percocet and Norco, among others.

Claims for unnecessary services or equipment included \$272.6 million to Medicaid, \$182.5 million to Medicare and \$9.2 million to Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan, the indictment said.

The circuit court lawsuits were assigned to different judges.

Jameson Cook, The Macomb Daily

See Royal Oak Tribune article [here](#).

See Oakland Press article [here](#).

See Macomb County Legal News article [here](#).