

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

**Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor**

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## **Former Pharmacy Director at Beth Israel Medical Center charged in theft of narcotic painkillers from hospital: Pills worth over \$5.6 million on black market**

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, announced today the indictment and arrest of ANTHONY D'ALESSANDRO, former Director of Pharmacy Services for Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan, for stealing and illegally possessing nearly 200,000 oxycodone pills, which he allegedly obtained from his place of employment since approximately 2009. These pills carried a street value of approximately \$5.6 million.

D'ALESSANDRO, who worked at the hospital for approximately 14 years, was arrested at his home at 35 Lynbrook Avenue on Staten Island this morning. He is expected to be arraigned later today in Manhattan Supreme Court, Part 94, before Judge A. Kirke Bartley, Jr.

An indictment charges D'ALESSANDRO with Operating as a Major Trafficker under New York State's Drug Kingpin Statute. He also faces one count of Grand Larceny and 247 counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance.

The large-scale theft of the highly addictive opioid painkillers came to light following the recent merger of Mount Sinai Medical Center and Continuum Health Partners, Beth Israel's former parent company, to form the Mount Sinai Health System. Immediately upon receiving an anonymous letter, with accompanying documentation, the new administration initiated a comprehensive investigation and internal audit. The case was then referred to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for further investigation and prosecution.

As Director of Pharmacy Services, D'ALESSANDRO was responsible for overseeing all of the medication stocked and dispersed at Beth Israel, located at First Avenue and 16th Street. The criminal investigation revealed that D'ALESSANDRO used his position and knowledge of the hospital's systems to steal oxycodone pills on at least 218 separate dates.

The internal investigation by Mount Sinai Beth Israel uncovered that D'ALESSANDRO diverted 193,376 pills between January 2009 and April 2014. The theft of these pills cost the hospital \$212,727, according to the internal review. These pills would have sold for \$5.6 million on the black market.

In carrying out the criminal scheme, D'ALESSANDRO accessed the hospital vault where medication is stored and removed various quantities of oxycodone. D'ALESSANDRO made false entries into the

electronic narcotics inventory system indicating the medication was being sent to the research pharmacy at the hospital, known as the Investigational Drug Service (IDS). Since D’ALESSANDRO controlled this service, he never shipped the pills to the IDS, but instead used them for his criminal activity.

Initially, D’ALESSANDRO obtained quantities of pills ranging from approximately 100 to 500. However, the quantity steadily increased through the years. By January 2014, he was removing as much as 1,500 pills in a single day, which carry a street value of over \$30,000.

Additionally, the investigation revealed D’ALESSANDRO filled at least seven fraudulent prescriptions written in the name of his wife at a pharmacy at the hospital. These prescriptions had been issued by a physician on Staten Island.

Hospital administrators approached D’ALESSANDRO with concerns related to their internal investigation on April 1, 2014. D’ALESSANDRO delayed a follow-up meeting. On April 2, D’ALESSANDRO once again signed out a large quantity of medication – 1,500 pills of oxycodone – purportedly for IDS. This constitutes the last crime charged in the indictment.

D’ALESSANDRO was initially suspended and then terminated from Mount Sinai Beth Israel on April 29, 2014. D’ALESSANDRO’s weekend employment as a per diem pharmacist at Staten Island University Hospital was also terminated.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN stated, “I want to thank Mount Sinai Beth Israel for notifying authorities when this issue came to light and for cooperating in the investigation. The indictment charges that one rogue pharmacist was responsible for the diversion of nearly 200,000 addictive pills. This case underscores the vigilance required when addictive medication with a high resale value is readily available – even to licensed professionals and trusted employees.”

INDICTED DEFENDANT	CHARGES
Anthony D’Alessandro 35 Lynbrook Avenue Staten Island, NY 11/09/1966	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct Grand Larceny 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 22 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> Intent to Sell – 22 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 189 cts CPCS 4 <sup>th</sup> – 7 cts CPCS 7 <sup>th</sup> – 7 cts

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