

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

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Former pharmacy director for Beth Israel Medical Center pleads guilty in theft of oxycodone pills: License forfeited

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, announced today the guilty plea of ANTHONY D'ALESSANDRO, former Director of Pharmacy Services for Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan, to four counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree.

Under the terms of the plea, D'ALESSANDRO is expected to receive a sentence of five years in prison, followed by five years post-release supervision. He forfeited his pharmaceutical license earlier this month. Following the plea, Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Bonnie G. Wittner remanded D'ALESSANDRO, who had been out on a \$500,000 bail bond. Sentencing is set for July 23, 2015.

As Director of Pharmacy Services, D'ALESSANDRO was responsible for overseeing all of the medication stocked and dispensed at Beth Israel, located at First Avenue and 16th Street. According to charges contained in a 249-count indictment, D'ALESSANDRO used the knowledge he gained during 14 years of employment at the hospital to steal nearly 200,000 oxycodone pills, which carried a street value of approximately \$5.6 million.

The investigation began after the merger of Mount Sinai Medical Center and Continuum Health Partners, the parent company of Beth Israel. The new Mount Sinai Health System received an anonymous letter shortly afterwards that explained the large-scale theft and provided related documentation. Administrators then conducted a comprehensive internal audit, and their findings were referred to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for further investigation and prosecution.

D'ALESSANDRO was arrested in July of last year at his home at 35 Lynbrook Avenue on Staten Island. Evidence uncovered in the internal audit as well as the criminal investigation found that D'ALESSANDRO had used his position to steal oxycodone pills on at least 218 separate dates between January 2009 and April 2014. Though the theft of the pills cost the hospital \$212,727, the oxycodone would have sold for approximately \$5.6 million on the black market.

D'ALESSANDRO covered up his activities by making false entries into the hospital's electronic narcotics inventory system indicating the medication was being sent to the research pharmacy at the hospital that he himself oversaw. Because he was in charge of the department, he was able to divert the pills instead of shipping them to their stated destination.

Hospital administrators terminated D'ALESSANDRO's employment at Mount Sinai Beth Israel on April 29, 2014. His weekend employment as a per diem pharmacist at Staten Island University Hospital was also terminated.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN thanked Mount Sinai Beth Israel for notifying the authorities and cooperating in the investigation.