



U. S. Department of Justice

Pamela C. Marsh
United States Attorney
Northern District of Florida

For more information contact:
Assistant U.S. Attorney Len Register
(850) 44-4000
Len.Register@usdoj.gov

October 12, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DESTIN PHYSICIAN NETS 30 YEARS FOR
DRUG OFFENSES RESULTING IN PATIENTS' DEATHS**

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA: Pamela C. Marsh, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced that Destin physician **Robert Bourlier**, age 55, was sentenced today for his conviction on 17 counts of health care fraud and 126 counts of unlawful dispensing of controlled substances, following a three-week jury trial last May. Chief U.S. District Judge Casey Rodgers sentenced Bourlier to 30 years in prison and ordered him to pay a \$500,000 monetary judgment. His wife, **Victoria Bourlier**, age 52, was also sentenced by Chief Judge Rodgers to 30 months for obstructing justice. At the beginning of Bourlier's trial, Victoria Bourlier pled guilty to charges that she had attempted to obstruct the investigation by removing records, documents and objects, including two safes and a duffel bag, from the residence she shared with Robert Bourlier while officials were executing a search warrant at Bourlier's medical office. As part of the sentence, the court also ordered the forfeiture of 3 Cadillac Escalades, a Ft. Walton Beach townhouse, \$55,741 in cash and bank deposits, a pair of diamond earrings, and Robert Bourlier's medical license. Additionally, the court directed Robert Bourlier to pay restitution in the amount of \$32,562.

At trial, the jury heard evidence that Bourlier, while practicing as an Internal Medicine physician in Destin, prescribed controlled substances to patients without a sufficient medical necessity, and did so in quantities and dosages that caused his patients to abuse, misuse, and become addicted to the drugs. Through the testimony of more than 76 witnesses, the jury learned that Bourlier continued to prescribe controlled substances even after he learned that the patients were addicted to the drugs, had suffered overdoses from them, were doctor shopping to get more drugs, or were, in some cases, selling the drugs on the street. As a result of Bourlier's unlawful prescribing practices, Medicaid, Medicare, Tricare, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield paid for prescriptions that were not medically necessary. The evidence also demonstrated that Bourlier submitted fraudulent claims for medical services to these health care benefit organizations.

In addition to the guilty verdicts, the jury returned a special finding that Bourlier's dispensing of methadone and alprazolam in September 2006, and his dispensing of hydrocodone and alprazolam in August 2007, resulted in the death of two patients.

Today's sentencings mark the end of a two-year long investigation by the Federal/State North Florida Health Care Fraud Task Force. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tiffany Eggers. U.S. Attorney Marsh praised the work of the team who brought the case to trial, and thanked the pharmacists and citizens who came forward to alert authorities about Bourlier's prescribing practices.