



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Secures Conviction of Pill Mill Operator for Violating Maryland Drug Kingpin Statute

BALTIMORE, MD (May 2, 2018) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that the Honorable Michael Wachs of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County convicted Tormarco Harris, 32, of Baltimore, on all counts in a 21-count superseding indictment after a 3-day bench trial. Specifically, Judge Wachs convicted Harris of one count of violating Maryland’s drug kingpin statute; one count of conspiring to distribute controlled dangerous substances; 18 counts of distributing controlled dangerous substances; and one count of maintaining a common nuisance. Sentencing has been scheduled for June 12, 2018. At sentencing, Harris faces a 20-year mandatory minimum prison sentence under Maryland’s drug kingpin statute and up to 20 years’ imprisonment on each of the conspiracy and distribution charges.

“Lives are being lost in every corner of our state to opioid addiction,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Harris and his co-conspirators operated pill mills and illegally prescribed highly addictive drugs in exchange for hundreds of dollars from each patient. My office, with the assistance of federal and local law enforcement, came down hard, shut them down, and Harris now faces decades of time behind bars.”

According to evidence admitted at trial, Harris and Dr. Kofi Shaw-Taylor owned and operated Starlife Wellness Center in Glen Burnie, Maryland. From June 2015 through August 2017, Harris and Dr. Shaw-Taylor ran Starlife as a pill mill, where, in exchange for cash, patients received unlawful prescriptions for large quantities of narcotics, including oxycodone, morphine, tramadol, and benzodiazepine.

Evidence admitted at trial also established that: patients paid as much as \$500 for their illegal prescriptions; on certain occasions, co-conspirator medical professionals working at Starlife were pressured to change prescriptions to prescribe higher quantities of narcotics to their patients; co-conspirator medical professionals wrote unlawful prescriptions for high volumes of oxycodone and other drugs to Harris and one of his relatives; and when law enforcement executed a search warrant at Harris’s home in August 2017, they found a large amount of cash, prescription pads, a cash counting machine, and numerous letters from national pharmacy chains placing Harris on notice of the problematic prescription practices at Starlife.

Dr. Shaw-Taylor previously pled guilty to a 5-year prison sentence based on his role at Starlife and another pill mill he operated in Baltimore called Westside Medical Group. In August 2017,

Attorney General Frosh [announced](#) the indictments of Dr. Shaw-Taylor, Harris, and eight co-defendants in connection with the pill mill operations in Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City. All of Harris and Dr. Shaw-Taylor's co-defendants have pled guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Attorney General Frosh thanked the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, particularly Assistant Attorneys General Marilee Miller and Brian Marsh, for their work on this matter. Attorney General Frosh also thanked the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Inspector General, particularly Special Agent E. Troy Yeager, who led the investigation of the case. Attorney General Frosh also thanked the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Howard County Police Department, Carroll County Sheriff's Office, Anne Arundel County Police Department, Baltimore County Police Department, and Baltimore City Police Department for their assistance during the investigation and prosecution of the case.