

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

SALINAS PAIN DOCTOR ARRESTED FOR FRAUD AND UNLAWFUL PRESCRIBING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2016
CONTACT: Amy Patterson, DDA
831-755-5252

Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on May 17, 2016, Salinas physician, Steven Mangar, was arrested and charged with 37 felony offenses following an investigation that was conducted jointly by the Monterey County District Attorney's Office, the California Department of Insurance, and the California Medical Board. The charges consist of submitting fraudulent health insurance claims and billings, furnishing drugs to an addict, and unlawful prescribing of medicine to patients who did not have the condition for which it was intended. In addition, he is charged with enhancements alleging his felonious conduct resulted in him fraudulently taking more than \$500,000. The Defendant faces a maximum sentence of 44 years, 8 months in state prison.

"Multi-faceted insurance fraud schemes are exceedingly sophisticated," said District Attorney Dean Flippo. "This complex investigation required review of tens of thousands of pieces of evidence. The review was painstaking and took approximately two years to complete. The investigators on this case have worked countless hours conducting numerous interviews of affected patients and witnesses, and maintained diligent investigative efforts, which resulted in the meticulous collection of evidence."

The unlawful prescribing charges focus on prescriptions Mangar wrote at his Salinas medical practice, Pacific Pain Care. The drugs involved include oxycodone (a powerful narcotic painkiller best known under the brand name OxyContin), hydrocodone (a narcotic painkiller often sold under the brand names Vicodin and Norco), morphine (a powerful narcotic painkiller), and Dilaudid (a powerful narcotic painkiller), and other highly addictive and dangerous medications.

These drugs are highly addictive and can result in overdoses and even death. There are more overdose deaths from prescription pain killers and sedatives than from heroin and cocaine combined. Drug overdose was the leading cause of injury death in 2013 among those 25 to 64 years old, causing more deaths than motor vehicle traffic accidents. In 2011, 1.4 million emergency department visits were related to the misuse or abuse of prescription drugs; of the 22,767 deaths relating to prescription drug overdose in 2013, 16,235 involved opioid analgesics (strong painkillers that produce morphine like effects) and 6,973 involved benzodiazepines (an addictive tranquilizer drug that commonly treats anxiety, seizures and sleep disorders). Non-medical use of prescription painkillers cost health insurers up to \$72.5 billion annually in direct health-care costs.

The newly launched Healthcare Fraud Unit, of the Monterey County District Attorney's Office, aggressively prosecutes prescription drug fraud by medical providers in Monterey County. The unit also investigates and prosecutes other cases including: use of another's identity to secure healthcare benefits; embezzlement; unlawful solicitations/referrals; fraudulent billing; inflated or falsified pharmacy billings; out-patient surgery center fraud; and fraudulent disability claims.

Bail has been set by the Honorable Julie Culver in the amount of \$1 million. He is expected to be arraigned within 48 hours. Any patient or insurance company that believes it may have been a victim of this fraud or criminal conduct is asked to contact the Monterey County District Attorney's Office at (831) 883-7508.