

FL Doc Arrested for Running Pill Mill, 3rd Offense

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A St. Petersburg doctor who was accused in 2011 of helping operate an illegal pain clinic in Pasco County was arrested again Thursday on charges that he was doing the same thing in Citrus County.

Dr. Daniel McIntire, 57, faces two counts of trafficking in the painkiller oxycodone, Citrus County sheriff's officials said.

He and another doctor, Dennis Varel, opened Central Pain Clinic in Crystal River last year, but never registered it with the state. Varel died Jan. 10 of an apparent drug overdose, sheriff's officials said.

The clinic, which deputies had been investigating for about a year, has dispensed 1.5 million narcotic pills since it opened, authorities said, with an estimated street value of more than \$12 million.

McIntire wrote as many as 172 prescriptions in a five-hour time frame — about 34 prescriptions per hour, deputies said. Patients came to the clinic from as far away as Colorado and New Jersey seeking drugs that included oxycodone, Xanax, Soma and methadone.

"This is a serious and very deadly business," Detective John Bergen, the case's lead investigator, said in a news release. "We are making these investigations our priority."

In December 2011, McIntire was among three staff members arrested at the Harbour Medical Group in Land O'Lakes on charges that they wrote excessive prescriptions for powerful drugs.

The charges against McIntire in that case were dropped about a month later, court records show. The reason is unclear.

His co-defendants in the case, Dr. William Crumbley, a Tampa doctor who allegedly ran the clinic after having his medical license suspended, and Ronald York, the clinic director, both still have court cases pending, according to records.

Charges were also dropped in what was perhaps McIntire's most serious brush with the law. In 2004, authorities in Broward County charged him with kidnapping and 11 counts of sexual battery, according to state law records. The circumstances that led to those charges were unclear Thursday, but prosecutors did not pursue the case.

Records show that McIntire had an active license to practice as an osteopathic physician in Florida. He also has a history of disciplinary action against him related to a previous conviction for fraud. The Department of Health issued an emergency suspension of his license after his arrest Thursday.

Sheriff's officials said a group of patients sat in the waiting room of McIntire's Crystal River clinic when deputies arrived Thursday. People in nearby offices cheered and clapped as detectives surrounded the building.

McIntire sat silently with his hands cuffed behind him while a deputy read aloud from a search warrant. The doctor was later booked in the Citrus County Jail and held on \$200,000 bail.