

Hills pharmacist among those indicted

By Wayne Post
staff writer

Pharmacists from West Bloomfield, Birmingham, Southfield, Farmington Hills, Troy and Plymouth were among those indicted on fraud and racketeering charges Tuesday by a federal grand jury.

Most of the indicted are or were involved with Unarex of Michigan, a

Detroit-based drug store chain allegedly involved in defrauding Blue Cross and selling prescription drugs to street dealers.

Alleging as much as \$200 million was generated in sales and fraud, law enforcement officials called the case the biggest of its kind in U.S. history.

THE GRAND jury indicts Unarex and its three principal officers —

Melvin D. Boyer, 45, Nathan Lee Pack, 64 and Paul Abraham Mittleman, 59 — gave generic drugs to prescription-holders, while billing Blue Cross for more expensive brand name drugs. In addition, the grand jury alleged Unarex billed insurance carriers prescription refills which never occurred.

It also alleged Unarex sold prescription drugs, including painkillers, to black market dealers who, in turn, sold the drugs to Detroit-area youths.

Boyer and Pack are West Bloomfield residents. Mittleman is a Southfield resident.

UNAREX OPERATES a chain of Detroit and suburban pharmacies under the Motor City Prescription Center name. A Unarex/Motor City outlet in Livonia and a Southfield pharmacy once owned by Pack and Mittleman were also named in the indictment.

A Unarex spokesman declined

comment on the indictments.

The following Observer-Eccentric area residents, all pharmacists, were among those indicted: Thomas J. Cummings, 41, Plymouth; Kevin T. Deane, 33, Birmingham; Irvin Tevilo, Bloomfield; Carl Martin Rose, West Bloomfield; Isaac Gross, 28, Southfield; Dennis Makowski, 40, Troy; Henry Brzduch, 44, Troy; David Levy, 41, Farmington Hills. Cummings, identified in the indictment as owner/manager of Unarex of Livonia, said he was innocent.

"WE'RE FIGHTING it," he said. "I feel I'm not guilty of anything. The essence is the other three guys (Boyer, Pack and Mittleman). I'm being drawn in it because of them." Brzduch, Gross, Levy, Rose and Makowski all declined comment after being contacted at their pharmacies.

Deane and Tevilo were unavailable for comment.

All pharmacies named in the indictment were open for business Tuesday, law enforcement officials said. A restraining order was sought, however, to block the stores from being sold.

Indictments followed a five-year investigation that involved the Great Lakes Drug Task Force, the FBI, the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration, the IRS and the Detroit Police Department. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan also cooperated. A Blue Cross spokesman said the operation affects all its customers though higher premiums.

"IT AFFECTS everybody," Grego-

ry Anderson said. "It's not just the pills, it's the bills."

Ironically, the indictments came at a time when street use of prescription drugs is declining.

"Now, it's crack," Detroit Police Chief William Hart said. "But people who were using these drugs as kids are still using today as adults."

Law enforcement officials added that black market prescription drug sales provided a lucrative market in their 1981-85 Detroit-area heyday. Drugs allegedly sold to street dealers included: Dilaudid, Demerol, Desoxyn, Preludin and Percodan. Demerol and Dilaudid are painkillers, Desoxyn and Preludin are amphetamine-like stimulants and Percodan is a tranquilizer.

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Smoking banned

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have admitted it's been good because they have cut down on their smoking," said Wolfe, a former smoker. When the policy was instituted, employees received an orientation meeting, "no smoking" signs were erected and employees were given no-charge participation in the hospital's smoking clinic, Gorchow said.

BUT FOR many it's not easy. Weiss, a nurse, knew the writing was on the wall and began cutting back before the policy was established.

"I quit because I knew I wouldn't be able to smoke for eight hours. I don't smoke in my car — that's nine hours. So why not stop?"

Weiss freely admits, "I still have a bad time. I will not smoke as long as I can manage it," she said, adding she still can't say she wouldn't and doesn't want to smoke.

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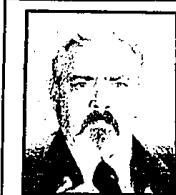
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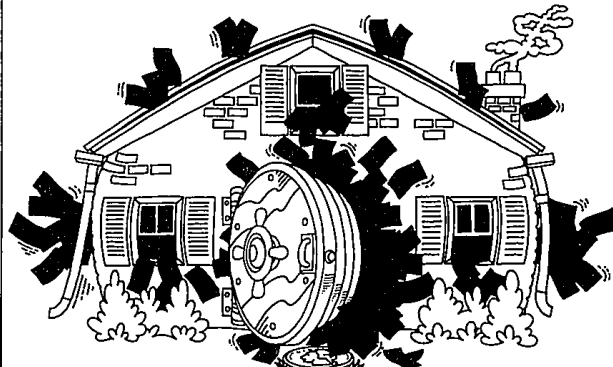
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