Las Vegas HCV Outbreak Doctor Guilty of Fraud and Conspiracy

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Dipak Desai, the Nevada doctor who is serving time in prison for a 2007 hepatitis C virus (HCV) outbreak, has pleaded guilty in federal court to one felony count each of conspiracy and health care fraud, the Las Vegas Review Journal reports.

Desai, 65, was indicted by a federal grand jury in 2011 on charges of conspiracy and 25 counts of health care fraud. The former practitioner was accused of inflating the length of medical procedures and over-billing insurers for anesthesia services performed at his Las Vegas endoscopy clinic between 2005 and 2008.

In 2013, Desai was also convicted of 27 criminal counts related to the hep C outbreak at his clinic, including second-degree murder for the death of one of seven HCV-positive patients referenced in the case. Prosecutors contended during trial that unsafe injection practices involving the re-use of anesthetic syringes ultimately led to the outbreak.

Desai is already serving a life sentence with the possibility of parole after 18 years for his role in the outbreak. Under this recent plea deal, he has now agreed to pay $2.2 million in restitution to the health insurance agencies he defrauded in the scheme and to forfeit $2.2 million to the U.S. government. The remaining fraud charges against him will be dismissed at sentencing on July 9.

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