U.S. Department of Justice

***Drug Enforcement Administration***

HOUSTON FIELD DIVISION

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www.dea.gov

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 ***NEWS RELEASE***

**DR. GERALD RATINOV AND 18 OTHERS ARRESTED IN ILLEGAL PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINIC OPERATION**

***Houston’s Pain Clinics and Related Pharmacies No Longer in Business***

March 29 - (Houston, TX) - Dr. Gerald RATINOV, was arrested along with 18 co-conspirators for violating criminal provisions of the Texas Occupations Code and other Texas laws pertaining to the legal operation of Pain Management Clinics.

RATINOV, a licensed and registered Texas physician, has maintained a medical license since December of 1965. Since the initiation of this investigation in September of 2010, RATINOV has been identified as the number one prescriber of Hydrocodone in Texas.

Hydrocodone is a prescription drug that is sometimes taken with Alprazolam and Carisoprodol, a combination popularly described as the “Houston Cocktail.”

Thomas E. Hinojosa, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration said, “Doctors and pharmacies have an obligation to comply and operate within the parameters of the law. Dr. Ratinov chose not to do so, which lead to an investigation by DEA and our law enforcement counterparts, resulting in the arrest of Dr. Ratinov and others who blatantly violated the law.”

Harris County District Attorney Patricia Lykos applauded the efforts leading to the indictments and arrests. “This is an example of the superb cooperation between federal and local authorities to protect our citizens.” Lykos said. “The DEA conducted a brilliant investigation and has stopped a dirty doctor and his cohorts from continuing to profit from the wretchedness of addiction. We will do our part to vigorously prosecute Ratinov and his co-defendants.”

RATINOV has acted as the medical director of at least three pain clinics located within Harris County without proper certification and while he was under judicial review by the Texas Medical Board, in violation of Texas law. These pain management clinics are:

* HOBBY MEDICAL CLINIC, located at 3809 Reveille Street, Houston, in Harris County, Texas 77087;
* ABUNDANT LIFE AND WEIGHT LOSS CENTER, located at 3838 Hillcroft, Suite 205, Houston, in Harris County, Texas; and
* ASTRODOME PAIN CLINIC, located at 2630 Westridge Street, Houston, in Harris County, Texas.

RATINOV utilized his clinics along with select pharmacies to fill fraudulent prescriptions with no medical necessity. These three clinics and their four related pharmacies can no longer dispense illegal pharmaceuticals on the streets of Houston.

This multi-agency investigation was led by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Harris County District Attorney’s Office with participation from the Texas Medical Board, the Texas Pharmacy Board, Department of Public Safety, Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, Harris County Sheriff’s Office, Houston Independent School District, Houston Police Department, Pasadena Police Department, Harris County Constable’s Office Precinct 2, Harris County Constable’s Office Precinct 6, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau.