

RREOU Lawyers Obtain Significantly Reduced Sentence for Pain Specialist

Dr. William Hurwitz, a prominent Virginia pain specialist, was convicted in 2004 of 50 counts of drug trafficking and received a 25-year prison term. Larry Robbins and other RREOU lawyers successfully appealed that conviction last year, and in the second trial in April, 2007, 12 counts were dismissed, and Dr. Hurwitz was acquitted of 17 counts, and found guilty of only 16 counts. On July 13, 2007, Dr. Hurwitz received a prison term of 57 months, of which he has already served about 2½ years.

According to the Saturday, July 14 edition of the *Washington Post*, "The case became a referendum of sorts on a national debate about whether licensed doctors prescribing legal medication to patients in chronic pain should be subject to prosecution if their patients abuse or sell the drugs. Patient advocates portrayed Hurwitz as heroic, saying that he only tried to help suffering people who had nowhere else to turn.

[Judge] Brinkema seemed to lean toward the patient advocate side when she imposed her 57-month sentence yesterday. Although she said she agreed that Hurwitz had gone from being a doctor to someone who gave "drugs to people for illicit means," she said that the "overwhelming majority" of his patients were legitimate and that Hurwitz had tried to help them.

When she first took the case, Brinkema said she thought the dosages that Hurwitz prescribed were "absolutely crazy." But she said defense witnesses turned her around. "An increasing body of respectable medical literature and expertise supports those types of high-dosage, opioid medications," the judge said."

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