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Vancouver pain clinic accused of medical malpractice for excessive opiate prescribing

A wrongful death and medical malpractice lawsuit has been filed against a Vancouver, Wa., pain clinic by four plaintiffs who allege the clinic prescribed excessive amounts of pain medications, causing overdose deaths and addictions.

The estates of two patients who died of opiate overdoses are suing Vancouver Payette Clinic in Clark County, Wa., circuit court, along with two other plaintiffs who allege the clinic prescribed them "grossly excessive" amounts of controlled substances that caused physical and mental injuries.

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"Payette Clinic practitioners knew or had reason to know that the massive quantities of controlled substances they were prescribing were either being diverted by patients and sold in the illegal drug market, or being taken by their patients at great risk to the patient's own health," the suit says.

The clinic was previously been linked to the Dec. 9, 2008 overdose death of an 18-year-old girl.

The lawsuit contends that between January and November 2007, five people prescribed opiates by the clinic died from prescription overdoses, ranging from methadone to morphine intoxication.

The suit contends the clinic failed to do pill counts or give its patients random drug tests to control the massive amount of pills prescribed. It said a man died from a drug overdose Sept. 29, 2009 after a nurse practitioner prescribed him over 5,000 morphine sulfate tablets, in addition to other drugs, between June 2007 and July 2008. At the time of his death, he had over 2000 200-mg morphine sulfate tablets in his possession.

The Payette Clinic was raided by federal narcotics agents in March 2009. By December 2009, the advanced nurse practitioners at the clinic forfeited for 2 years (until December 2011) their licenses to prescribe Class II opiates, including oxycodone, Oxycontin, methadone or morphine.

Source: [The Oregonian](#)

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