

Drug Firm Exec Sentenced to Over 2 Years for Illegally Selling Opioids



Laurence Doud, former CEO of Rochester Drug Co-operative, has been sentenced to 27 months in prison for conspiring to distribute opioids illegally in the first illegal opioid trafficking case against a drug wholesaler and its executives. Doud's crime was described as serious and "motivated solely by profit" by U.S. District Judge George Daniels, but he ruled that the government's requested sentence of 15 years was excessive. Despite the sentence, Doud will remain on bail while he appeals his conviction to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The sentencing follows charges filed against Doud and another RDC executive in 2019, which accused the pair of conspiring to distribute illegal narcotics and ignoring red flags that the drugs were being sold illegally. The charges related to RDC's opioid sales led to the company filing for bankruptcy in 2020 and agreeing to pay \$20 million to settle criminal and civil charges.

The opioid epidemic has devastated the United States, with over half a million people dying from drug overdoses between 1999 and 2020, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Doud's sentencing is significant as it marks the first criminal opioid trafficking case against a drug wholesaler and its executives. It also warns other companies and executives that they may face severe consequences if they prioritize profit over responsibility.

During the sentencing hearing, Doud's attorney, Robert Gottlieb, argued that his client should avoid jail entirely because he did not intend drugs to be sold illegally. However, the judge disagreed, stating that Doud's crime was serious and that he "cared more about his paycheck than his responsibility...to prevent dangerous opioids from making their way to pharmacies, drug dealers, and people struggling with addiction."

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Doud expressed remorse for his actions before being sentenced, telling the judge that he had "no desire to see anyone be hurt" and was "forever sorry for the problems that have occurred because of this." However, the judge noted that Doud's remorse came too late, as the harm caused by his actions had already been done.

Chief Compliance Officer William Pietruszewski, the other RDC executive charged in the case, pleaded guilty and testified against Doud. He is scheduled to be sentenced on March 29. The case against Doud and Pietruszewski highlights the importance of companies having effective compliance programs to prevent illegal activities and the potential consequences if these programs are not followed.

In conclusion, Laurence Doud's sentencing sends a clear message to drug wholesalers and executives that they may face severe consequences if they prioritize profit over responsibility. The opioid epidemic has devastated communities across the United States, and those who contribute to it must be held accountable for their actions. While Doud's sentence may not have been as severe as the government requested, it nonetheless warns others that they will face the consequences for their actions.