

# State seeks license suspension for four Indiana doctors

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INDIANAPOLIS - Four Indiana doctors are accused of using dangerous prescribing practices and unsafe drug mixes, and the State of Indiana is seeking to suspend their licenses temporarily.

All four doctors work for the Wagoner Medical Center. On Monday, Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller filed the petitions with the Medical Licensing Board of Indiana against Dr. Don Wagoner, his wife Dr. Marilyn Wagoner, Dr. Robert Brewer and Dr. William Terpstra. Wagoner Medical Center has an office at 821 N. Dixon Rd. in Kokomo and 605 E. 7th St. in Burlington.

Don Wagoner started his medical practice in the Burlington building in the 1960s. The doctors caught the attention of the attorney general's office when patients died.

According to the petitions, an investigation revealed unsafe pharmacological mixes, high prescribing rates for controlled pain medications and numerous patient deaths resulting from multiple drug toxicity.

"At this point, we have alleged 12 patient deaths," said Jessica Krug of the Attorney General's office. "We believe that the physicians at the clinic that we have filed against were contributing to or creating addiction or maintaining addictions and may have contributed to or caused the death of several patients."

The Attorney General's office says Wagoner and the other doctors routinely ignored acceptable standards of medical practice of the dozen patients. The complaint does not use the patients' names - they are assigned a letter.

"Patient C" died of respiratory failure and to opiate overdose eight days after having his prescription refilled. Documents say "Patient H" tested positive 36 times for marijuana and oxycodone "which he did not have a prescription for...and the doctors prescribed a combination of pain killer and other drugs known as the 'lethal triad'" which, according to the complaint filed by the state, ultimately led to his death.

"Evidence revealed that the practices of these doctors pose a clear danger to their patients and the public," said Gabrielle Owens, Deputy Director of the Attorney General's Licensing Enforcement and Homeowner Protection Unit. "These types of aggressive prescribing practices can lead to diversion, abuse and addiction. Our office has worked diligently to bring these actions quickly in order to ensure patients are protected while formal licensing complaints are being completed."

The Attorney General's complaint also says that the doctors pre-signed prescription pads for unrestricted distribution by the nurse practitioners and physicians assistants.

The board will consider all four of the petitions for summary suspension at its next meeting on March 27.

Owens said if the suspensions are granted, the physicians could not practice medicine for at least 90 days while the Attorney General's office drafts formal complaints to submit to the board. In licensing cases, the board has the authority to determine what, if any, disciplinary action will be taken.



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