

A former doctor at the National Institutes of Health has been convicted of a felony related to his work for asbestos companies.

Dr. Jack W. Snyder, a physician and licensed attorney with training and experience in pharmacology, toxicology, pathology, and public health, pled guilty to lying on federal financial disclosures.¹ “Government employees owe their loyalty to the taxpayers,” said U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein. “If government employees want to earn outside income related to their official work, they can do so after truthfully disclosing the matter and obtaining approval.²”

During just three of the years Dr. Snyder was on the government payroll, he was paid almost \$600,000.00 from private litigation clients, including defendants in asbestos litigation, whose private litigation positions about the cancer causing potential of asbestos were in direct conflict with those held by the National Institutes of Health.³

Dr. Snyder served as an expert witness in litigation on behalf of asbestos product manufacturers in at least six different cases.⁴ Although he never authored a single paper about asbestos, Dr. Snyder became a self-professed testifying expert in the field. While serving as an Associate Director of the National Library of Medicine, Dr. Snyder was being bankrolled by companies whose products had been alleged to have caused mesothelioma, a particularly lethal form of asbestos-related cancer. In his role as asbestos company advocate, Dr. Snyder testified repeatedly that the asbestos used in his client’s products was incapable of causing mesothelioma, remarkable because the only proven cause of mesothelioma is asbestos.

In one such case, Troy D. Chandler, a Williams Kherkher attorney specializing in mesothelioma cases, decided he could not take it anymore. “The first thing one learns when he goes to law school is that the success of our legal system rises and falls on its ability to get to the truth,” Troy recalled. “The first thing one learns when representing mesothelioma victims, is that the success of those who profited from asbestos rises and falls on their ability to hide the truth. Hiring Dr. Jack Snyder, and others like him, is just one way these killers perpetuate fraud in our courts everyday.” Troy represented the victim in that case, a welder, whose life long exposure to asbestos products Dr. Snyder claimed had nothing to do with his mesothelioma.

Troy was so incensed at what he heard under oath from Dr. Snyder that he wrote a detailed complaint prompting an investigation into Dr. Snyder’s illegal activities.⁵ “Dr. Snyder sat there and lied to me for several hours under oath in his deposition. His lies

¹ See “Judgment of Conviction” attached.

² See NIH Press Release attached.

³ See “Statement of Facts” attached, at paragraphs 11-13.

⁴ See Deposition of Jack Snyder, attached, at pg. 35, line 7.

⁵ See Letter attached.

about asbestos were so blatant, so contrary to the National Institutes' of Health official positions, and so purposefully calculated to deny a mesothelioma victim his day in court, that I just couldn't take it lying down," Troy lamented. Troy shot off his complaint to, among others, Dr. Snyder's boss, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director of the National Institutes of Health, and another to the Office of Inspector General. Mr. Chandler asked for an immediate investigation into Dr. Snyder's asbestos consultations and inquired how a government doctor could represent companies whose products had killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, some of whom were Troy's clients. "I didn't know who was worse, the doctor for lying, or the asbestos companies who profited from the lies," claimed Mr. Chandler.

It worked. Troy Chandler's letter made it to the office of the U.S. Attorney who launched an official investigation into Dr. Snyder's for-hire-opinion-factory. What they discovered was that Dr. Snyder had led a complete private consulting practice out of his government office and his private home. Dr. Snyder earned more money acting as a private consultant than he did as a government doctor. His loyalty was to his illegitimate private clients, not to the taxpayer who paid his legitimate salary. The U.S. attorney discovered that Dr. Snyder was warned repeatedly about violations of conflicts of interest.⁶ They uncovered that Dr. Snyder made material misstatements in his required financial disclosures. The doctor had not revealed anything about his work in asbestos litigation, and certainly had not disclosed how lucrative it was. Dr. Snyder was charged and convicted of one count violating 18 USC §1001, Making a False Statement on his Financial Disclosure Forms.

When asked how he felt upon learning of Dr. Snyder's conviction Mr. Chandler remarked, "My client died. He died as a result of the actions of Dr. Snyder's clients. I wish there was more that could be done. Dr. Snyder helped that company get away with killing my client, and perhaps many others. In the end, he was only convicted of lying. It reminds me of how the government got Al Capone, not for murder, but for lying on his tax returns. Oh well, at least this doctor's lying career is over, and I am pleased that the U.S. Attorney did something about it."

⁶ See Statement of Facts" at paragraphs 4-8.