



by Freddy Groves

Pharmacy chain nailed for fraud

Now here's a real shocker. Typically when the VA's Office of Inspector General (VAOIG) and the DOJ have nailed criminals, it's either an individual or a handful of thieves. To learn of a major chain in the U.S. being pegged for crimes isn't something we expect.

But it has happened. A long-established pharmacy chain, with approximately 9,000 locations around the country, has been hit with a \$315 million fine for fraud crimes they've committed for 13 years. They were reported by a whistleblower.

The crime: illegally filling prescriptions for opioids and other substances and then filing for payment from the VA, Medicare and other federal health-care programs. Specifically, they were filling prescriptions that they knew "lacked a legitimate medical purpose, were not valid and/or were not issued in the usual course of professional practice." Additionally, prescriptions were filled from prescribers known to issue fraudulent prescriptions and were in dangerous combinations of other opioids.

Why did pharmacists willingly fill prescriptions they knew were suspect or dangerous or fake? Apparently it was because of corporate policy. Headquarters imposed "performance metrics" and — in something that will send a chill down your spine — created policies that "allegedly prevented pharmacists from warning one another about certain problematic prescribers."

Read that again: They kept pharmacists from telling their co-workers about problems with prescriptions.

From now on the chain will be required to do something they should have been doing all along. They're going to create a hotline for employees and the public to report suspected illegal dispensing of drugs, monitor patterns of prescribing opioids and watch the prescribers suspected of illegal prescribing.

So, I'm shocked, but thinking back, maybe I shouldn't be. For years I had my prescriptions filled at a location in this chain, by a great pharmacist. But I always sensed he was unhappy and under stress. One day he disappeared. Word was he went to work for a very small local pharmacy and that he was very happy there. Now I know why.

© 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

FROM KING FEATURES WEEKLY SERVICE,
300 W. 57th STREET, 15th FLOOR, NEW
YORK, NY 10019

CUSTOMER SERVICE: (800) 708-7311 EXT.

257

VETERANS POST

FOR RELEASE OCT. 26, 2026

By Freddy Groves