



# Department of Justice

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## **Former Doctor Sentenced to 120 Months for Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances**

**LONDON, Ky.** — A former Clarksville, Tenn., physician, John Stanton, 51, was sentenced on Thursday, April 13, to 120 months in federal prison, by U.S. District Judge Robert Wier, following his conviction for conspiring to unlawfully distribute controlled substances.

According to evidence presented at his trial, Stanton was a licensed physician and Medical Director at Gateway Medical Associates in Tennessee, which was registered as a pain management clinic. Evidence established that Stanton worked with John Maccarone, the owner of GMA, to prescribe controlled substances, often a combination of oxymorphone and oxycodone, to individuals who presented as patients to GMA. These individuals exhibited signs of diversion and abuse, such as repeatedly failing drug tests and displaying mental health issues. In prescribing in this manner, Stanton failed to adhere to accepted professional standards for prescribing controlled substances for the treatment of chronic pain.

Also, testimony at trial established that patients who were being treated by Stanton and Maccarone exhibited obvious signs of drug diversion and abuse, traveling more than four hours each way to GMA, from southern and eastern Kentucky, and waiting 10 hours or more to be seen. Patients often failed urine drug tests and avoided “mandatory” pill counts by paying a “no show fee.” GMA patients often paid more than \$400 in fees (typically paid by prepaid debit card) to the clinic for each visit. At trial, the evidence also revealed that GMA served as a source of supply for drug traffickers during the conspiracy.

Stanton was convicted at trial in August 2022.

Stanton’s co-defendants were sentenced to the following, for their roles in the conspiracy:

- Dr. James Maccarone was sentenced to 84 months in prison and ordered to forfeit his GMA property, approximately \$204,000 held in bank accounts, to pay a \$1.3 million money judgment, and to forfeit his medical license;
- Jeffrey Ghent was sentenced to 60 months in prison and ordered to pay a \$150,000 money judgment;

- Terry Prince was sentenced to 68 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay a \$250,000 money judgement.

Under federal law, Stanton and his co-defendants must serve 85 percent of their prison sentences. Upon his release from prison, Stanton will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for three years. In addition to his prison sentence, Stanton was ordered to forfeit \$318,300, forfeit his medical license, and pay a \$100,000 fine.

Carlton S. Shier IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; and J. Todd Scott, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Louisville Field Division; Daniel Cameron, Kentucky Attorney General; Col. Phillip Burnett, Commissioner, Kentucky State Police; and David Rausch, Director, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation; jointly announced the sentence.

This case as investigated, in part, by members Operation UNITE. The investigation was conducted by the DEA, the Kentucky Office of Attorney General, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation; and the London Police Department, with assistance from the Lake Cumberland Area Drug Task Force, Clarksville, Tennessee Police Department, Clay County Sheriff's Office; and Knox County Sheriff's Office. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Smith.

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