

Attorney General Raoul Obtains Guilty Plea In Case Of Williamson County Nurse Who Unlawfully Possessed Fentanyl

March 7 2023 9:06 AM



CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced today the Attorney General's office obtained a guilty plea in a case against a Williamson County woman who unlawfully possessed fentanyl.

In a case Raoul's office prosecuted in Williamson County Circuit Court, Linnea O'Neal, 46, of Norris City, Illinois pleaded guilty to unlawful possession of a controlled substance, a Class 4 felony. As a first time offender, O'Neal will serve two years of probation in which she must perform 30 hours of community service, submit to drug treatment and testing, and pay \$3,500 for fines and fees. Additionally, O'Neal can no longer have employment with access to controlled substances.

"The opioid epidemic has tragically affected too many people in Illinois, and we must take a comprehensive approach to addressing it," Raoul said. "I am committed to holding accountable individuals who distribute fentanyl in our communities. Health care professionals who have access to addictive controlled substances must be held responsible for misusing them."

In November 2021, O'Neal worked as a nurse at Heartland Regional Medical Center in Marion, Illinois when she diverted several doses of fentanyl from the facility's medication dispensing machine. Following an Illinois State Police investigation, O'Neal was arrested in November 2022 and confessed to the unlawful possession of fentanyl.

"Medical professionals are in a position of trust and criminal abuses of that trust cannot be tolerated," said Illinois State Police (ISP) Director Brendan F. Kelly. "ISP will continue to work with Attorney General Raoul's Office to combat the opioid epidemic by investigating any diversion of controlled substances."

The case is part of Attorney General Raoul's comprehensive approach to combatting the ongoing opioid epidemic with a comprehensive approach to ensure resources are available to abate the crisis. Raoul's office continues to prioritize obtaining resources to abate the crisis in Illinois, which included negotiating the Illinois Opioid Allocation Agreement last year. The agreement is intended to ensure the approximately \$1.3 billion Illinois will receive through last year's historic national opioid settlements and potential future settlements.

Assistant Attorney General Darren Price prosecuted the case for Raoul's Medicaid Fraud Bureau.

Attorney General Raoul urges anyone who believes they or a loved one may be addicted to opioids to seek help by calling the [Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances](https://www.illinois.gov/health/helpline) at 833-2FINDHELP, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.