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September 30, 2005

Pacific Health Center Ordered to Pay \$1.7 Million for Unlicensed Medical Practices

SEATTLE - Attorney General Rob McKenna today announced that a King County Superior Court judge ordered Pacific Health Center in Bellevue and its president, Monte Kline, to pay \$1 million in civil penalties for violating the Consumer Protection Act by engaging in the practices of medicine, acupuncture and naturopathy without a license.

In addition to the civil penalties, Kline and Pacific Health Center were ordered to pay more than \$700,000 in restitution for consumers and attorney's fees.

The order came after the Attorney General's Office and the state Department of Health sued the defendants for engaging in the unlicensed practices and for making unsubstantiated medical claims about the effectiveness of "electrodermal testing" to diagnose certain health conditions.

"This court order is a victory for consumers who were misled by Monte Kline and his business, Pacific Health Center," Attorney General Rob McKenna said. "Kline deceptively violated the law by practicing medicine and naturopathy without a license. We believe Pacific Health Center administered its 'electrodermal testing' to at least 5,000 consumers since Kline began business in Washington. Patients have a right to fully understand their health care providers' qualifications and expect that they have met state licensing requirements.

"Assistant Attorneys General Paula Selis and Cheryl Kringle and the members of the Consumer Protection division who supported them deserve praise for their outstanding work on this case," McKenna continued

The court order prohibits Pacific Health Center and Kline from representing that they practice any form of medicine or other licensed health care, but does not prohibit them from providing nutritional advice.

A Court of Appeals commissioner has granted a partial stay of the order pending appeal by Pacific Health Center and Kline, but only if Pacific Health Center and Kline post a \$200,000 bond to cover any additional restitution payments or attorney fees should their appeal be unsuccessful. The bond has not yet been posted.

The court decisions address many of the allegations brought by the Attorney General's Office lawsuit and the Attorney General has moved to dismiss the remaining causes of action without prejudice.

Background:

The Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Division sued Pacific Health Center and Kline in 2003 for violations of the Consumer Protection Act. In addition to the unauthorized practice claims, the office alleged that the defendants misrepresented Kline's credentials to offer medical advice to consumers and failed to substantiate the diagnostic capabilities of the "electrodermal testing" device.

Kline has heavily advertised his health center and its services on the Internet, radio broadcasts and seminars and made claims he can help those suffering from high cholesterol, depression, hypertension, allergies, arthritis, immune deficiencies and osteoporosis, among other conditions.

Kline claimed "electrodermal testing" could identify ailments such as allergies, nutrient deficiencies, energetically weak organs, toxicities, and the root cause of disease. According the Pacific Health Center's Web site, the procedure involves taking "resistance readings" on the surface of the skin.

In addition to the "electrodermal testing," Kline offered a treatment regimen that involved individualized diets based on the test results. The regimen included health supplement products that he sold.

Kline, who has referred himself as Dr. Monte Kline in his radio shows, does not have a doctorate of medicine.

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