



Parents of drug abusers celebrate doctor's arrest

By **GEORGE BRENNAN**
STAFF WRITER

SANDWICH - They call him "Dr. Feel Good," and they want his medical license taken away.

Members of Learn To Cope, a group of parents of drug-dependent children, are celebrating the arrest of Dr. Michael R. Brown, 52, and are hoping the charges against him stick. Shortly after his arrest Monday night, a thread opened on the group's discussion board applauding it.

"I hope he rots in hell," stated one posting on the Web site.

Joanne Peterson, founder and spokeswoman of Learn To Cope, said Brown's name has come up repeatedly among the group's 147 members who are dealing with children hooked on OxyContin and heroin. Peterson is from Raynham, but the group has members from all over the South Shore and Cape Cod. Brown is the only Cape doctor that the group is targeting.

"I just heard about his arrest (Monday) night, and I can't say that I'm not elated," Peterson said. "His license should be pulled. It should have been pulled a long time ago."

The state licensing board is aware of Brown's arrest but can't confirm if there are any complaints against him. Brown has never been charged in connection with OxyContin.

Parents from Learn To Cope allege that Brown distributes OxyContin to patients who are not terminally ill or in chronic pain.

Brown's attorney, Russell Redgate, has heard the rumors and seen the television reports. He said that only physicians can prescribe OxyContin, and so only another physician, and not a journalist, would know if a person should be prescribed the powerful painkiller.

Peterson brought a group of protesters to Sandwich two weeks ago to picket outside Brown's 449 Route 130 office. One of the protesters carried a sign that read "Dr. Brown = Dr. Death."

Peterson says doctors who liberally prescribe OxyContin are destroying lives. Her own son, who is not one of Brown's patients, got hooked on the drug, then on heroin and nearly died. He is recovering, but she said it's been "three years of hell."

The Sandwich protest was covered by a Fox television reporter who has done an undercover investigation of Brown.

During the demonstration, Brown was caught on videotape running toward reporter Mike Beaudet, who has described Brown as being among the "biggest prescribers of OxyContin in the state."

Brown was stopped by a police officer who then arrested the doctor.

In his report of the incident, Officer Bruce Lawrence wrote that he "grabbed Dr. Brown's hand and told him to get on the ground. I felt if he was not controlled he would have struck Mr. Beaudet."

Redgate said videotape of the incident will exonerate his client. "My assessment of the assault charge is that the (district attorney) is going to have a hard time selling an assault conviction," he said.

Meanwhile, parents of drug-dependent children say they're hoping these charges against Brown stick.

They plan to continue to keep the pressure on doctors they believe over-prescribe OxyContin and will cooperate with investigators.

"He should be shut down today," Peterson said.

Staff writer Karen Jeffrey contributed to this report.

(Published: August 24, 2005)

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