

Seattle doctor charged with illegal steroid sales

Originally published June 30, 2007 at 12:00 am Updated June 30, 2007 at 2:03 am
By [Carol M. Ostrom](#)

Original article found online at: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattle-doctor-charged-with-illegal-steroid-sales/>

A Seattle physician with a history of legal trouble has been charged in federal court with illegally selling anabolic steroids, which are controlled drugs, to undercover agents posing as patients.

Dr. Howard J. Levine was being held Friday in the SeaTac federal detention center. Meanwhile, the state Health Department has suspended his medical license.

Prosecutors in U.S. District Court in Seattle allege that Levine sold testosterone gel and nandrolone decanoate gel, both anabolic steroids, from 2004 to 2006, without examining patients or establishing a true physician-patient relationship.

State authorities allege some of the drugs were bound for the black market.

He was not arrested until recently, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Parrent, because he had been negotiating with federal authorities regarding his cooperation in a larger investigation.

As part of that negotiation, Parrent said, Levine had surrendered his federal license to prescribe controlled substances and agreed not to use his medical license.

But Levine, who operated Northwest Lifestyle Medicine, was arrested Tuesday after Seattle police found unspecified controlled substances in his house on June 17, Parrent said. On Thursday, a federal grand jury returned an indictment.

Levine's attorney, Jan Phillip Olson of Seattle, declined to comment, saying he has not had time to review the case.

It's not the first time Levine has been in trouble, both with the law and with the state's Medical Quality Assurance Commission.

In 2000, Levine was convicted in U.S. District Court in San Diego of extortion and wire fraud for making a false claim against Jack in the Box. Levine claimed the restaurant had served him

spoiled chicken, then demanded they pay him \$500,000, prosecutors said. He was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison.

When he returned to Washington state, his license was suspended for six months, with three years of probation. It was reinstated in 2002.

In 1999, Levine was disciplined by Washington state authorities for providing substandard care in several abortions.

State authorities in 1999 also ordered Levine to stop selling Viagra over the Internet without personally examining patients.

The same year, he was charged in Kansas with violation of that state's consumer-protection laws for allegedly selling Viagra to a 16-year-old boy. A trial court found him not guilty, and prosecutors eventually lost their appeal.

Carol M. Ostrom: 206-464-2249 or costrom@seattletimes.com

Carol M. Ostrom