



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 1, 2014

## Prominent Cancer Doctor Prescribed Unnecessary Chemo, Killing Healthy Patients

Imagine a well-renowned oncologist gives you the life-rending news that you have cancer. You then undergo rounds of sickening, body-rending chemotherapy only to much later learn it was all a con designed to make money prescribing unnecessary medical treatment.



This is precisely what prominent Michigan cancer specialist Dr. Farid Fata pled guilty to recently in a case a U.S. Attorney [called](#) “the most egregious” example of healthcare fraud her office had ever witnessed. The *Detroit Free Press*’ Tresa Baldas [reported](#) on the story:

“It is my choice,” Fata said on Tuesday [9/16] of his surprise guilty plea, which included rattling off the names of numerous drugs he prescribed for his patients over the years. In each admission, he uttered these words:

“I knew that it was medically unnecessary.”

Fata, 49, a married father of three, pleaded guilty to 13 counts of health care fraud, two counts of money laundering and one count of conspiracy to pay and receive kickbacks. He faces sentencing in February before U.S. District Judge Paul Borman.

... Fata of Oakland Township was charged with running a \$35-million Medicare fraud scheme that involved billing the government for medically unnecessary oncology and hematology treatments. The government says Fata ran the scheme from 2009 [when the Lebanon native was naturalized] to the present, through his medical businesses, including Michigan Hematology Oncology Centers, with offices in Clarkston, Bloomfield Hills, Lapeer, Sterling Heights, Troy and Oak Park.

It wasn’t just chemotherapy, either. As *Time*’s Kate Pickert [reported](#), “In even more egregious cases, investigators say Fata falsified cancer diagnoses in order to justify — and receive payment for — positron emission tomography (PET) scans, which include radiation.”

It should be emphasized here that Fata was prescribing poison, as this is essentially what chemotherapy is, which is why it not only destroys cancer cells but healthy ones in the process. And as [Inquisitor.com wrote](#), listing several destroyed, formerly healthy victims:

I lost my sister and her children lost a mother,” said Cindy Burt. “There’s just no justice for that.”

White Lake resident Karen Baldwin said her husband, Harrison, was treated for a diagnosis of brain cancer.

... Dave Kroff was also put through years of unnecessary chemotherapy by Fata. Kroff says that the chemo [suppressed his immune system](#) so badly that he lost both of his legs.



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... Multiple [civil suits](#) have already been filed, according to Click On Detroit. For example, Donna Virkus, the daughter of one of Fata's patients, says that her 78-year-old father, Donald, was referred to Fata by a concerned physician to rule out esophageal cancer.

"It's unbelievable. I can't believe we put our trust into a doctor that was supposed to take care of him and ended up killing him," Virkus said.

Donna's father never had the cancer, a review of Donald's medical files showed. Yet, the prestigious cancer doctor ordered two years of chemo. The civil suit alleges that Donald developed a blood-related cancer as an effect of the chemotherapy treatments. Donald later died.

Additionally, there's an immigration angle to the story. As Pickert wrote, "The criminal complaint also outlines accusations that [the newly naturalized] Fata arranged for foreign doctors, who might have been unlicensed to practice medicine in the U.S., to treat patients in his multiple clinic locations."

Making the case even more tragic is that Fata's scam could have been stopped early on, as a chemotherapy nurse named Angela Swantek blew the whistle on the doctor in 2010. Finding his practices so shocking that she left his office after only an hour and a half of employment, Swantek warned Michigan authorities that Fata was prescribing chemotherapy incorrectly — at toxic levels. Yet despite giving the state the doctor "on a silver platter," as she put it, the authorities dismissed her complaint, saying they discovered no evidence of malpractice.

Of course, Swantek did find herself up against Fata's seeming impressive reputation. As [ZoomInfo.com records](#), "Dr. Fata was voted by his peers to be one of the 'Top Doc's' in Hematology and Oncology in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 by *Hour Detroit Magazine*. He has received numerous awards including: 'Outstanding First Year Resident,' 'Intern of the Year,' and multiple clinical research awards." And how could Fata's image be so different from the reality?

Perhaps because of another scam: the fraudulent granting of medical awards and accolades.

As ABC News [wrote](#) in 2012 about just one of the medical-award organizations it scrutinized, "Their database of 'Top Physicians' includes doctors with serious criminal and disciplinary records." And this is no surprise — doctor awards can essentially be bought. As an example, ABC reports that "a couple of hundred" physicians have paid to be at TopDocs.com and that "the cost to buy a spot on the website ranges anywhere from \$1,500 to \$10,000, in addition to an annual fee of \$1,600." And relevant to Fata's selection as a "Top Doc" by his peers, "A hospital employee from a large urban hospital who wishes to remain anonymous told ABC News that a senior hospital administrator sent an email offering a \$300 American Express gift card to the first 100 doctors who nominated their peers for a top doctor award," wrote ABC.

And the effects of this fraud are obvious, as patients often choose doctors based on honors and awards. Unfortunately for Fata's patients, however, the only thing their "Top Doc" was top at was lying and making money — and killing.



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