

## Patients Praise Doctor Arrested On Drug Charges



News Channel 8 photo by CONCETTA WILSON

John N. Mubang, 57, was arrested at his Seffner office following a six-month investigation.

By [ELAINE SILVESTRINI](#) | The Tampa Tribune

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TAMPA - Law enforcement agents burst into a Seffner clinic run by the former medical director of the Hillsborough County Jail this afternoon and charged the doctor with drug trafficking.

Patients of John N. Mubang said investigators read a list of names of people who died of overdoses from prescriptions written by Mubang, who was handcuffed as his startled patients were questioned by law enforcement officers.

Mubang, 57, was charged with three counts of prescribing drugs for monetary gain and one count of trafficking in controlled substances, according to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The arrest followed a six-month investigation that started after the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office received complaints from several citizens, according to the FDLE. The investigation revealed that Mubang provided controlled substances to patients without a medical necessity.

Investigators from the sheriff's office, FDLE and the Drug Enforcement Administration descended on the office about 4 p.m.



**John Mubang**

"I was just in here to see a doctor for the first time and I was in the waiting room, and then I just seen the green team run in with masks and guns and everything," said one patient, Allyn Morsn of Seffner. "Then they interviewed us about drugs. I heard them read a list of how many people are deceased from him selling ... drugs to them. ... I guess he's in pretty big trouble."

"They just came in and told us all to stay still and not to leave," said another patient, Helen Burgess. "They would be back in a little while to ask us questions. ... They just asked us how long we've been coming here and what types of medications we get from this doctor." Burgess said she's been seeing Mubang for 20 years.

"He's a very good doctor," she said.

Another patient, Leah Ciccone-Bridges, was outraged about the raid. "He's a good doctor," she said. "He just wrote me prescriptions. ... I have my MRI's. I have back X-rays. So everything in my file is legit."

She said she thinks the investigators were invading the patients' privacy. "They're going through our files. They're not letting us be seen as patients. They just bombarded the place."

Another patient praised Mubang. "Dr. John Mubang is an excellent, excellent doctor, very caring," Kevin Farfan said. "My wife went in and out of the hospital several times for surgery and we have seen him working all hours of the morning. Whenever there's been a problem, he's come to our aid."

Mubang served as the medical director of the jail when Tennessee-based Prison Health Services was the facility's medical provider. Mubang also worked for Prison Health Services' predecessor, Correctional Medical Services.

It was unclear exactly when Mubang resigned, but Prison Health Services was the county's inmate medical provider for three years until October 2005.

Mubang specializes in internal and ambulatory medicine and has about 1,000 patients at his practice, according to testimony he gave in a deposition in 2006.

A Tampa Tribune examination of records at the Hillsborough County Medical Examiner's Office found two people who overdosed on prescriptions written by Mubang in 2006.

Denise Sims, 42, died Jan. 18, 2006, of the combined effects of alprazolam and oxycodone, according to medical examiner records. Investigators found both medications prescribed by Mubang a week earlier.

Carl Hyder, 21, died on July 8, 2006, of the combined effects of alcohol, hydrocodone and alprazolam, according to medical examiner records. Investigators found drugs prescribed by Mubang two days earlier: hydrocodone and alprazolam, as well as carisoprodol, a muscle relaxant marketed under the brand name Soma. Most of the pills in the bottles had been consumed, according to medical examiner records.

When contacted by a sheriff's deputy about Hyder's death, Mubang didn't know Hyder was his patient, according to a sheriff's investigation report. Mubang "asked what medications was Carl Hyder on and after hearing what he had prescribed for his patient, he stated that he must have died from hypertension or a stroke," the report states.

Hyder's mother, Tammy, walked up to a reporter outside Mubang's office this afternoon, her eyes brimming with tears. She held the last photo taken of her son, when he caught the garter at his brother's wedding.


"He died in his sleep," she said. "He got custody of his children on Friday and on Saturday morning, he was gone."

Asked her reaction to Mubang's arrest, she said, "I feel some kind of peace."

News Channel 8 reporter Krista Klaus and photojournalist Jim Webb contributed to this report. Reporter Elaine Silvestrini can be reached at (813) 259-7837 or [esilvestrini@tampatrib.com](mailto:esilvestrini@tampatrib.com).

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