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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELASE**

**THE Doctor Patient Forum Protests Actions of Anti-Opioid Doctor, Andrew Kolodny**

*Pain Patients to Raise Awareness of Moral Entrepreneur’s Role in Pain Patient Deaths and Suicides*

**WALTHAM, MASSACHUSSETS, UNITED STATES, October 25, 2023** — Disabled and chronically ill patients will protest the actions of Dr. Andrew Kolodny and his role in the suicides of pain patients who have had their opioid medications taken away. The rally will take place at the main entrance outside Brandeis University Campus. The protest will take place from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm on Wednesday, October 25, 2023.

The protesters are part of a national organization known as [The Doctor Patient Forum](https://www.thedoctorpatientforum.com/) (DPF), a self-funded non-profit that raises awareness about untreated pain and pain patient abandonment, death, and suicide.

Kolodny, an outspoken and well-publicized anti-opioid advocate, has stated that suicides occurring after patients are cut off their pain medications or force tapered are “[totally bogus](https://www.cleveland.com/open/2013/03/proposed_painkiller-abuse_rule.html),” that [racism "protects" Black people from addiction](https://www.vox.com/2016/1/25/10826560/opioid-epidemic-race-black), and that America will “[have to wait for this generation to die off](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/danvergano/opioid-addiction-decline-blue-cross) before the [opioid] crisis comes to an end.”

“At best, Kolodny’s denial of untreated pain patient suffering is willful ignorance,” according to Claudia Merandi, DPF founder and patient advocate. “At worst, it is a cruel, tone-deaf dismissal of reality for financial gain.” She points to the more than 80 suicides documented from 2016 to 2022 [by the National Pain Council](https://www.nationalpaincouncil.org/_files/ugd/704935_5bfbfa77e6324bfea72e0521a12519ff.pdf?index=true), an independent citizens group that advocates for equity in the treatment of pain. She said the number is likely much higher because of the stigma associated with disclosing opioid use and suicide. A [University of Alabama study](https://www.csiopioids.org/) is underway that promises to assess the incidence of suicide more thoroughly in pain patients cut off from opioids.

The protesters say Kolodny cannot be objective about the compassionate use of opioids for pain because he has made millions of dollars as a witness in opioid multidistrict litigation. He and the anti-opioid organization he helped co-found, Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing (PROP), have had undue influence on the creation of the CDC’s [Guideline for Prescribing Opioids](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/rr/rr7103a1.htm), protesters say, which put hard limits on opioid prescribing for chronic pain, despite [concerns expressed by many medical societies and associations](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/CDC-2015-0112/comments?filter=society%2C%20association%2C%20academy).

The Guidelines have subsequently been weaponized by the DEA, state medical boards, and state attorneys general to keep doctors from prescribing opioids even when they think it is medically necessary because they fear harassment from law enforcement. The widespread fear has caused doctors to either dismiss, cut off, or force taper their pain patients. These actions have resulted in some patients, desperate for relief, to seek medication on the black market, or to end their lives.

Kolodny’s anti-opioid crusade contributed to the [death of Brittany Hightower](https://www.okaybliss.com/brittany-hightower-story/), protesters say. Hightower was a Sickle Cell Disease patient who died after emergency room doctors in Houston denied her treatment and kicked her out of the hospital accusing her of drug seeking.

Kolodny himself acknowledged that “nobody wants these patients,” in a Sept 25th, 2023, article in Newsday.com, which describes how chronic pain patients are routinely dumped from clinical practices by fearful doctors attempting to avoid DEA raids. [An independent survey](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/danvergano/opioid-prescriptions-survey-sermo) found at least 10% of doctors cite fear of getting into trouble with licensing boards and drug regulators as the main reason for not prescribing opioids, and another 22% cite the hassles and risks involved.

This trend in reduced prescribing is confirmed by [the CDC’s own data](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/rxrate-maps/index.html), which shows opioid prescriptions have decreased by more that 53% from 2006 to 2020. While opioid prescribing has plummeted, [opioid overdose deaths continued to rise](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db457.htm#:~:text=Drug%20overdose%20deaths%20have%20risen,increased%20from%2017.1%20to%2019.6.) , suggesting lowering prescribing has contributed to an increase in deaths.

**About The Doctor Patient Forum**

Our Mission is to support pain patients and their providers with access to lifesaving pain relief and to mitigate the harmful effects of efforts to curb prescribing and overdose. With a focus on disabled people, those with chronic pain, and providers who work with them, DPF provides information, practical tools, and policy analysis to strengthen patient-centered safe and appropriate medical support and advocates for approaches that reduce increasingly common suffering and death resulting from non-consensual medication reduction or termination of care. We need our elected officials to stand up for the one hundred million Americans who live with chronic pain and illness.

For more information visit [www.TheDoctorPatientForum.com](http://www.TheDoctorPatientForum.com).

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