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Contact:

Gina Kaysen Fernandes
gina@jurisproductions.com
626-356-3006 (office)
626-376-1456 (cell)

UC Regents Settles \$10-million Whistleblower Lawsuit With UCLA Doctor Who Exposed Physician Misconduct.

LOS ANGELES, Ca. – After weeks at trial, the University of California Regents agreed to settle a lawsuit that accused the institution of covering up corruption and physician misconduct at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

Robert Pedowitz, M.D. contends he suffered retaliation after reporting conflicts of interest and other misconduct by doctors that he witnessed as chairman of the UCLA Department of Orthopedic Surgery in 2009. “This is about a doctor who walked into a new job, sees corruption and speaks out,” said attorney Mark Quigley, who represents Dr. Pedowitz.

While the UC system may claim it encourages its employees to report improper activity and promises to protect employees that come forward, that’s not what actually happens. “Instead the UC tries to cover up the wrongdoing by protecting the wrongdoers and retaliating against the whistleblowers,” said Quigley.

Dr. Pedowitz testified at trial about one of the orthopedic surgeons receiving \$250,000 in consulting fees in 2008 from device maker Medtronic. Dr. Pedowitz also testified about writing memos to university officials raising concerns about recurrent conflicts of interest and unethical activities by other doctors at the medical school. Dr. Pedowitz’s attorneys argued UCLA turned a blind eye to this conflict of interest because the university profited from the success of medical products or drugs developed by its doctors.

“Patients have a right to know if their doctor is receiving income or gifts from the company whose product the doctor is promoting for their health care,” said Quigley.

The University of California agreed yesterday to pay \$10-million dollars to the former surgical chairman just before closing arguments. Dr. Pedowitz’s attorneys hope this case sends a message to other public institutions that violations of law and university policy do not have a place in higher education.

Dr. Robert Pedowitz’s attorneys include Mark Quigley, Ivan Puchalt, and Christian Nickerson with the Santa Monica, CA law firm of Greene Broillet & Wheeler, LLP.

