

Ohio News Bureau  
2445 St. Clair Ave.  
Cleveland, OH  
44114

(216) 241-0675

Publication:  
Portsmouth Daily  
Times-Portsmouth  
3/17/2011

Page:  
3  
Circulation:  
14005

County:  
Scioto  
Portsmouth, OH]

clipper7715

Ord: 000344

Keyword:  
BWC



# DeWine, BWC close Portsmouth 'pill mill'

**"I think it's safe to say that he is among the highest not only in the county, but in the whole state,"**

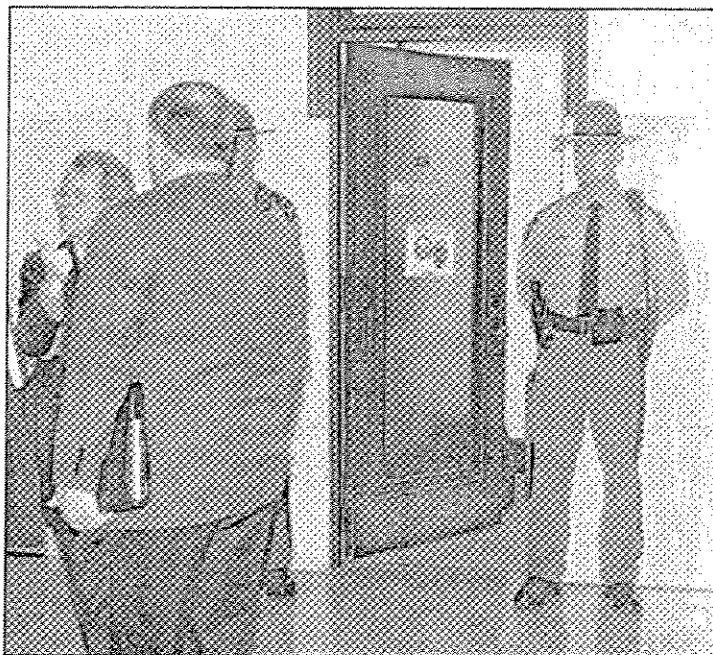
Steve Buehrer, administrator of the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation, about Dr. James Lundeen, whose Portsmouth office was closed today

By RYAN SCOTT  
OTTNEY  
PDT STAFF WRITER

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine joined investigators from the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation (BWC) and other state and local agencies to serve a search warrant to Dr. James Lundeen, at his office on Chillicothe Street in Portsmouth. At the same time, investigators were also searching Lundeen's office in Plymouth, Ohio.

"Today, we're serving a search warrant to a doctor who we believe has a pattern of over-prescribing in this area," said Steve Buehrer, administrator of the Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation, adding that they have been watching Lundeen for several years.

Tom Wersell, director of BWC investigations, said the agency was very concerned about the unusually large number of pre-



Wayne Allen © Daily Times

**Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and more than 10 state agencies were in Portsmouth Wednesday to investigate a doctor who is suspected of over-prescribing drugs.**

scriptions being written to injured workers at Lundeen's offices in Portsmouth and Plymouth. He would not comment on the exact number or type of prescriptions they have seen coming from Lundeen, but said he is responsible for 61 percent of all Scioto County narcotics prescriptions in the BWC system.

"I think it's safe to say that he is among the highest not only in the county, but in the whole

state," Buehrer said.

Officers from the Portsmouth Police Department, Ohio Highway Patrol, Bureau of Criminal Investigations and other investigative agencies filled the fourth floor hallway of the Masonic Temple outside Lundeen's office. The action was also assisted by the Scioto and Huron County Sheriff and Prosecutor, Ohio State Medical Board and Phar-

See CLINIC, A3



Wayne Allen ■ Daily Times

**Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Administrator/CEO Stephen Buehrer, right, and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine were in Portsmouth Wednesday to discuss the BWC fraud investigation involving Dr. James E. Lundeen.**

## Clinic

From Page A1

macy Board, Medicaid, Department of Taxation, Ohio Department of Insurance, Ohio Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, FBI, Drug Enforcement Agency and the U.S. Attorney General.

Buehrer said the office is closed to the public during the investigation.

"We have patients entering the facility this morning, and some I believe are still continuing to come up. We're interviewing some of those — the ones that want to cooperate — to get information about why they were coming and what their history with the doctor is," Buehrer said.

No one was arrested on Wednesday, he said.

"We're not investigating the patients here today," Buehrer said.

DeWine called the activity an unprecedented cooperation of more than 10 agencies, led by investigators from the BWC.

"This is a high-priority for Gov. Kasich. It's a high-priority for me as attorney general, this prescription drug problem in southern Ohio," DeWine said. "The governor and I are going to bring all the assets of state government and local government together to go after pill mills ... and to drown them out of the state of Ohio."

He said the drug abuse problem is much greater in southern Ohio — citing statistics that 7 percent of babies born at Southern Ohio Medical Center in Portsmouth last year were addicted to drugs; 9.8 million painkiller pills were prescribed in Scioto County last year.

Investigators entered Lundeen's office in Portsmouth at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday,

and DeWine said Lundeen has been very cooperative. His office will remain closed while the investigation is ongoing.

"This should be a warning today for any rogue doctor in the state of Ohio that is prescribing drugs in an inappropriate manner, who is poisoning our young people. We are going to go after them. We are going to take their license away from them, and we'll put them in prison," DeWine said.

Lundeen's license has not been taken away yet, but DeWine said he expected that they would pursue that action.

Buehrer said there are also ongoing BWC investigations into other providers in the community, and DeWine confirmed "more is coming."

**RYAN SCOTT OTTNEY** can be reached at (740) 353-3101, ext. 235, or [rottney@heartland-publications.com](mailto:rottney@heartland-publications.com).