

Wichita Cardiologist settles allegations for \$5.8 million

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WICHITA, Kan. (KAKE) - A well-known Wichita cardiologist has agreed to pay nearly six million dollars to the federal government and others, after being accused of performing unnecessary surgeries, dating back years.

"We believe they were unnecessary and that they were implanted solely for Dr. Galichia's greed," says Lawyer Larry Wall.

This is what Larry Wall believes about claims against Galichia Medical Group. He says they improperly billed federal health care programs for medically unnecessary cardiac stent procedures.

A whistleblower, a former employee of Galichia's, turned him in.

"They get 20 percent of any recovery so it's all financial," says Gary Ayers, Galichia's attorney.

Stents carry risk to the patient of stroke, heart attack or death.

"So to install or implant a stent that is not necessary is a reckless procedure. And if it's medically not required, it's even worse," says Wall.

Ayers says they hired nationally recognized cardiologists to take a look at Dr. Galichia's medical procedures, and analyzed about 100 cases.

"All of our board certified cardiologists said that the procedures were necessary, that they were well done, and they did that by looking at the film of the medical procedures themselves," says Ayers.

Galichia says he settled because the case was taking up too much time, energy and resources. He also agreed to not participate in any federal health care program for three years.

"So we reached a settlement and said look we think your allegations are bogus but sure we'll settle with you so Dr. Galichia can move on. And that's the case," says Ayers.

"He's wasted 7 years fighting it, he's going to waste 7 years paying it off, and I think that's a lot longer than just simply writing a check," says Wall.