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**RINGLEADER OF NYC OXYCONTIN DRUG-DEALING CREW SENTENCED
IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOSEPH M. DEMAREST, JR., the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Field Division ("DEA"), announced that YUSEF SHABAZZ, of Middletown, New York, was sentenced yesterday to 120 months in prison for his involvement in a years-long conspiracy to distribute OxyContin in the New York City area. SHABAZZ, 69, pleaded guilty to narcotics conspiracy, the first count of the Indictment against him, in February 2009. Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN imposed the sentence late yesterday in Manhattan federal court.

According to the Indictment to which SHABAZZ pleaded, other documents in this case, and statements made in Manhattan federal court:

From May 2005 through July 2008, SHABAZZ was the ringleader of a group of individuals who acquired and distributed thousands of 80-milligram tablets of OxyContin and thousands of 4-milligram tablets of Dilaudid. Both drugs are Schedule II narcotics prescribed to treat moderate to severe pain, which are sold on the street as a substitute for illegal narcotics, including heroin. SHABAZZ recruited individuals with sickle-cell anemia, a painful blood disorder, to assist him in his scheme.

The sickle-cell patients went to a number of different doctors in Manhattan every month seeking treatment for their medical condition. Often using aliases and false social security numbers, they obtained prescriptions for OxyContin and Dilaudid and turned them over to SHABAZZ, who sold the pills to other drug dealers and users for a profit.

SHABAZZ's three co-defendants also pleaded guilty to the narcotics conspiracy count. DAMIEN HALL and JACQUELINE MASON were sentenced by Judge KAPLAN on June 19, 2009, to 72 months and 48 months in prison, respectively. DAVID HALL is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge KAPLAN on January 22, 2010.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the FBI and the DEA and thanked the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement and the City of New York Human Resources Administration Bureau of Fraud Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorneys MICHAEL BOSWORTH and AMIE ELY are in charge of the prosecution.

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