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Sentencing postponed for former researcher

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Paul Kornak, 53, has pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide in the death of James DiGeorgio, 71, back in 2001.

Prosecutors said Kornak falsified medical records to enroll DiGeorgio in experimental cancer drug studies. He died three weeks later.

Daughter Mary Smavlin said, "Tuesday it started. By that weekend, he couldn't eat. He couldn't drink. He couldn't eat. He couldn't swallow. He couldn't do anything. I hold Kornak responsible of lying to my dad, telling him that this treatment was going to be a miracle drug."

Smavlin trusted Kornak because she thought he was a doctor, but he never finished medical school. Kornak's lawyer, E. Stewart Jones, said it was DiGeorgio's cancer, not his client, that led his death.

Jones said, "The falsification on the records had absolutely nothing to do with that. It did not contribute in any way to their death. It did not accelerate their death."

Kornak will be back in the U.S. courthouse on Sept. 13 for sentencing, but many of the victims' families said he's not the only one who should be inside that courtroom.

Jeffrey Fudin is a former pharmacist with the VA's program who agrees with the families. He believes there were improprieties within the experimental drug program dating back as far as 1993.

Fudin said, "Kornak is a spit in a large ocean here. There are people in the VA administration who have been involved in cover-ups for greater than 10 years."

Officials at Stratton Medical Center said they can't comment on the investigation.