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◆ **Saint Francis Medical Center in Missouri agreed to pay \$1.625 million in a civil settlement of allegations it violated the Controlled Substances Act, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Missouri said Sept. 1.**<sup>[1]</sup> According to the U.S. attorney's office, Saint Francis employed Farmington physician Brett Dickinson, who allegedly "wrote prescriptions for controlled substances without legitimate medical purposes and outside the usual course of professional practice." The hospital, through Dickinson's actions, "issued invalid prescriptions for opioids such as morphine, hydromorphone, and oxycodone," the U.S. attorney's office alleged. "Dickinson prescribed these opioids to patients simultaneously with muscle relaxers and benzodiazepines." These drugs enhance "the addictive, euphoric effects of opioids and, as a result, are commonly sought-after in combination with opioids by individuals with substance abuse disorders and individuals who seek to use opioids recreationally." Dickinson allegedly prescribed them "while ignoring warning signs of drug diversion or misuse, including aberrant urine drug test results and patients' previous hospital treatment for medical problems related to drug misuse." The hospital cooperated with the government's investigation.

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