

Jailed Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal Wins Hepatitis C Treatment



Washington, January 9 (RHC)-- A U.S. federal judge has ruled that the state should provide former Black Panther activist and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal with life-saving medication to treat his hepatitis C infection.

Abu-Jamal was given an order by U.S. District Judge Robert D. Mariani to see a doctor in the next two weeks to determine if there is a medical reason he should not be given the costly drugs.

If cleared, the state will be required to provide Abu-Jamal with the newly-developed direct-acting antiviral medication, also known as DDA.

"The struggle is far from over: the DOC will no doubt appeal this ruling. But a victory!" Robert J. Boyle, a New York lawyer who is representing Abu-Jamal, said in a statement, outlining his belief that the Department of Corrections will overturn the ruling.

Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center in Pittsburgh told The Philly newspaper that the ruling marks the first time "a federal court has ordered prison officials to provide an incarcerated patient with the new

(hepatitis C) medications that came on the market in 2013."

Abu-Jamal was discovered to have the viral infection in 2015 when he collapsed into a diabetic shock and had to be hospitalized. Lawyers then filed to have his medical treatment improved.

The state currently harbors about 7,000 inmates that have the infection, amounting to a total treatment cost of around \$600 million if they were to all receive the new medication.

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