

# ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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MAYS LANDING— A suspended Atlantic County lawyer was sentenced to three years in prison today for distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, specifically prescription pills, First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik said.

Prior to being sentenced, Avis Cole told the court that at the time of her crimes, she was suffering from depression and her life was out of control. She asked the Judge to sentence her to long-term, inpatient treatment as an alternative to incarceration. However, Superior Court Judge Michael A. Donio stated that he did not have to make that decision because Cole did not provide a letter stating that a bed in a treatment facility was available. The Judge also said that the plea agreement was lenient. In addition to the prison term, Cole was sentenced to 18 months to run concurrent for passing a bad check, which was in the amount of \$800, according to Chief Assistant Prosecutor Cary Shill.

Cole, 52, of Vineland, formerly of Hamilton Township, admitted at her April 9 plea hearing, that on various dates between December of 2008 and February of 2009 she worked with her former client to unlawfully distribute hundreds of prescription pills at various locations throughout Atlantic County. Cole obtained prescriptions for controlled substances, including Roxicodone from her physicians and sold them with the assistance of her former client. During the course of this criminal activity Cole received approximately \$3,000 in proceeds, Shill said.

Cole was arrested on March 3, 2009, by Members of the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, Gangs, Guns and Narcotics Unit.

**Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.**