

WESTWOOD (CBSLA.com) — The University of California Board of Regents agreed to pay the former chair of UCLA's Department of Orthopaedic Surgery \$10 million to settle a whistleblower lawsuit.

Dr. Robert Pedowitz, 54, sued UC regents and numerous UCLA doctors in 2012, claiming he suffered retaliation after making serious allegations about undisclosed **money** doctors were allegedly receiving from the medical industry.

The case was about to go into closing arguments at the **trial**, when suddenly, a settlement was reached, KCAL9's Randy Paige reported.

“A number of the doctors on his faculty were receiving substantial amounts of money from outside **industry**. These same doctors were promoting the products that were manufactured by these companies that were making the payments. And they weren't disclosing it,” the plaintiff's attorney, Mark Quigley, said.

Consumer Watchdog's Jamie Court said patients have a right to know when their doctors are **making money** from the products they prescribe for their patients, and taxpayers have a right to a portion of the money that was going directly into the doctor's pockets.

“We can’t afford that lost tax revenue, and patients really can’t afford not to have the knowledge,” he said.

UCLA declined KCAL9’s request for an on-camera interview.

Instead, the university released a statement, which said, in part, “UCLA acted fully within the scope of law and UC policy in this case. Multiple investigations by university officials and independent investigators concluded that conduct by faculty members was lawful. Patient care was not compromised. UCLA adheres to stringent ethical and procedural guidelines and will continue efforts to do so.”

“They’re still in denial, they say they didn’t do anything wrong, they say there were no patient safety issues, and that is not what the evidence was,” Quigley said.

Judge Marilyn Milian of the People’s Court gave her view on why a settlement was reached.

“Any litigant that settles a case does so because they think it will be cheaper to settle than to take a risk. In particular when that settlement is \$10 million, you don’t arrive at that decision lightly. You consider how the trial went, you consider what your chances

are if there's going to be an appeal, you consider how costly an appeal might be in terms of lawyers and litigation costs, and sometimes there's a value in putting an issue behind you and moving on with **your business**," she said.