

As Boston Sees White Collar 'Boom,' Hinckley Allen Bulks Up

By **Chris Villani**

Law360 (February 16, 2021, 5:12 PM EST) -- Hinckley Allen Snyder LLP recently bolstered its white collar practice with the addition of eight attorneys from Barrett & Singal PC, bulking up in a shifting Boston market that has become a hotbed of high-profile criminal cases.

The firm last month added partners Michelle Peirce, Bruce Singal and William Sinnott, along with five additional attorneys at the counsel or associate level. Expanding the white collar footprint in the city is crucial, Hinckley Allen attorneys said, with the U.S. Department of Justice changing hands and a new U.S. attorney set to replace Andrew Lelling.

"I think the practice is going to boom, I think there will be a lot of white collar work and enforcement in areas that have been more dormant of late," Peirce said. "Certainly there will be a lot of litigation under the Cares Act and COVID-related investigations or prosecutions related to the PPP loans or other types of fraud related to the money that went out quickly."

Cases connected to the environment, as well as those brought under the False Claims Act, also figure to be "bursting at the seams," Peirce added.

Another focus for the DOJ has been China, as academics with ties to the country increasingly face probes into how they spend grant money. Singal, who will co-chair Hinckley Allen's research misconduct group along with counsel Elizabeth McEvoy, said that enforcement trend is likely to continue under the Biden administration.

"I don't think it's going to change and I think, politically, it's difficult for Biden to retreat from that hard line on China," Singal said. He added that the firm is representing some scientists whose universities are investigating them for failing to disclose ties with Chinese universities. Such probes are often handed off to the DOJ.

The addition of the attorneys from Barrett & Singal, which has been rebranded as Summit Health Law Partners, brings Hinckley Allen's white collar roster to nearly two dozen attorneys in five states, said Laura Angelini, who has been with Hinckley Allen since 2002 and been a partner there since 2012.

"We have had a well-established white collar practice for many years and so have they," Angelini said. "The idea of combining forces, adding depth, adding talent, adding new subject matters, was just very exciting."

More than half the firm's white collar lawyers are at the partner or counsel level, she added, and the impact is far-reaching.

"We are involved in almost every active major investigation out of the U.S. attorney's office in Boston," Angelini said.

Peirce added that the personnel move is allowing Hinckley Allen to become a "regional powerhouse" in the internal investigations space.

But headline-grabbing prosecutions have become more commonplace in the hallways of the Moakley federal courthouse in Boston. In addition to grant fraud charges against Harvard and MIT professors, they've included the "Varsity Blues" college admissions case, the prosecution of former Insys Therapeutics Inc. executives charged with bribing doctors and the case against a state court judge charged with helping an undocumented immigrant evade federal custody.

Before expanding its roster, Hinckley Allen represented one of the three landowners cleared of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud in connection with a land purchase deal for Wynn Resorts Ltd.'s \$1.6 billion casino resort project.

At their former firm, Singal and Peirce represented Barry Cadden, the founder of the now-defunct New England Compounding Center. While Cadden was convicted of racketeering and fraud in 2017 for his role in distributing mold-contaminated steroids, which sickened nearly 800 people and resulted in more than 100 deaths, he was cleared on more than two dozen second degree murder counts.

Peirce said the change in firms provided her, Singal and the rest of their colleagues "the best of both worlds."

"[Hinckley Allen] has a bigger platform and [more expertise in substantive areas but it also has a lot of the small firm qualities I didn't want to let go of," she said.

Singal left a firm that bore his name for 23 years and called it "a terrific place." But he said his new landing spot has even more depth and a broader geographic reach.

"I feel like I died and went to legal heaven," he said.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.