



## *U.S. Department of Justice*

*Kenneth J. Gonzales*

*United States Attorney*

*District of New Mexico*

*201 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NW*

*Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103*

CONTACT: *Elizabeth M. Martinez, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney, Public Affairs Officer*  
[elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov](mailto:elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov) – 505-224-1469

---

### PRESS RELEASE

---

**For Immediate Release**

**December 14, 2010**

### **RIO ARRIBA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL PRESCRIPTION FORGERY, FIREARMS AND IDENTITY THEFT CHARGES**

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that, earlier today, **Randy Branch**, 21, a resident of Rio Arriba County, pleaded guilty to federal prescription forgery, firearms and identity theft charges before United States Magistrate Judge Lorenzo F. Garcia. Branch has been in federal custody since his arrest on June 2, 2010 on a 19-count federal indictment charging him with:

- Fourteen counts of using forged and fraudulent prescriptions unlawfully to obtain Schedule II controlled substances, including hydrocodone, oxycodone and dextromethamphetamine (Counts 1-14).
- Two counts of defrauding two health care benefit programs, one of which was Medicare, into paying for the controlled substances he obtained through forgery and fraud (Counts 15-16).
- One count of being a prescription drug addict unlawfully in possession of firearms in violation of federal firearms laws (Count 17).
- Two counts of using the identification of another to fraudulently obtain controlled substances (Counts 18-19).

The indictment alleged that Branch allegedly used forged and fraudulent prescriptions to obtain an aggregate of 900 tablets of hydrocodone, 750 tablets of oxycodone, and 60 tablets of dextromethamphetamine between September 2009 and December 2009.

Branch pleaded guilty to Counts 10, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of the Indictment under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office which requires him to serve 42-month term of imprisonment to be followed by a three-year term of supervised release.

In his plea agreement, Branch admitted that, on December 7, 2009, he knowingly submitted a forged prescription for oxycodone to a retail pharmacy and unlawfully obtained oxycodone. Branch further admitted that on December 7, 2009 and December 27, 2009, he executed and attempted to execute a scheme to defraud a health care benefit program by submitting forged prescriptions written in the names of other persons to retail pharmacies. When he submitted the forged prescriptions on these two dates, Branch did not pay for the pharmacy for the medication dispensed, and he knew that the health care benefit programs for the individuals named on the prescriptions would be billed, and would pay, for the medication.

Branch also acknowledged that he was a regular user of and addicted to oxycodone on February 18, 2010, when he was in possession of four firearms. Finally, he admitted using the identification of another person on November 30, 2009 to commit a felony. On that day, Branch knowingly submitted a forged prescription which contained the forged signature of a physician to a retail pharmacy without lawful authority.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration with assistance from the Los Alamos Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive, and was being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John C. Anderson.

# # #