

For Immediate Release  
April 21, 2011

**RIO ARRIBA COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO 42-MONTHS IMPRISONMENT  
FOR CONVICTION ON FEDERAL PRESCRIPTION FORGERY, FIREARMS,  
HEALTH CARE FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT CHARGES**

ALBUQUERQUE – United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales announced that, this morning in federal court in Albuquerque, **Randy Branch**, 22, was sentenced to a 42-month term of imprisonment for his conviction on federal prescription forgery, health care fraud, firearms and aggravated identity theft charges. Branch, a resident of Hernandez in Rio Arriba County, will serve a three-year term of supervised release after he completes his prison sentence.

Branch was arrested on June 2, 2010 on a 19-count indictment and has been in federal custody since that time. The first fourteen counts of the indictment charged Branch with using forged and fraudulent prescriptions unlawfully to obtain Schedule II controlled substances, including hydrocodone, oxycodone and dextromethamphetamine. In aggregate, Branch allegedly used forged and fraudulent prescriptions to obtain 900 tablets of hydrocodone, 750 tablets of oxycodone, and 60 tablets of dextromethamphetamine between September 2009 and December 2009. Counts 15 and 16 charged Branch with defrauding two health care benefit programs, one of which was Medicare, into paying for the controlled substances he obtained through forgery and fraud. Count 17 charged that Branch, a prescription drug addict, unlawfully possessed firearms in violation of federal firearms laws. Counts 18 and 19 charged Branch with using the identification of another to fraudulently obtain controlled substances.

On December 14, 2010, Branch pled guilty to Count 10, charging him with obtaining a controlled substance by fraud; Counts 15 and 16 charging him with defrauding health care programs; Count 17, charging him with being a drug addict in possession of a firearm; and Count 18, charging him with aggravated identity theft, under a plea agreement with the United States

Attorney's Office. At the conclusion of today's sentencing hearing, the court dismissed the remaining counts of the indictment.

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

###

11-179