



PRESS RELEASE

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**PHYSICIAN FROM RATON, N.M., PLEADS GUILTY TO
TRAFFICKING IN PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in Albuquerque federal court, **Gilbert Christopher Aragon, Jr.**, 48, pled guilty to a five-count criminal information charging him with violating the federal narcotics laws by unlawfully trafficking in prescription drugs and related offenses, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales.

The information to which Aragon pleaded guilty charged him with: (1) conspiracy to acquire prescription drugs by fraud, forgery, fraud, deception and subterfuge; (2) obtaining prescription drugs by fraud, forgery, deception and subterfuge; (3) unlawfully distributing prescription drugs without a legitimate medical purpose; (4) using the identity of another person to obtain prescription drugs by fraud, forgery, deception and subterfuge; and (5) corruptly persuading a witness to make false statements. Aragon admitted committing these offenses in Colfax County, N.M., between July 2009 and July 24, 2010. During this period, Aragon was a physician employed by the Family Practice Clinic in Raton, N.M. He continues to be employed at the Clinic.

In his plea agreement, Aragon admitted that, on July 9, 2009, he conspired with his wife, who is not charged, fraudulently to obtain Hydrocodone, a prescription painkiller, by providing a prescription to a former patient, who filled the prescription and gave the Hydrocodone to Aragon and his wife. Aragon acknowledged that the former patient did not have a legitimate medical need for the Hydrocodone, and that he and his wife shared the Hydrocodone. Aragon further admitted that, on July 30, 2009, he fraudulently obtained Hydrocodone by having a mentally-challenged patient fill a prescription and give the Hydrocodone to him. The patient had no legitimate medical need for Hydrocodone, which Aragon used for himself.

According to the plea agreement, on April 17, 2010, Aragon instructed a nurse at the Family Practice Clinic to prepare a prescription for Ativan, a prescription medication for anxiety, using the DEA registration/provider number of a health care provider at the Family Practice Clinic. Aragon admitted that his colleague did not give him permission to use her DEA registration/provider number and had no knowledge that he used her number for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining the Ativan.

Aragon also admitted that, between July 19, 2010 and July 24, 2010, he asked a nurse at the Family Practice Clinic to make false statements to the police about his criminal activities. Aragon repeatedly asked the nurse to lie for the purpose of hindering the investigation into his criminal activities.

The court released Aragon on conditions of release under pretrial supervision pending his sentencing date, which has yet to be scheduled. At sentencing, Aragon faces up to four years of imprisonment on Counts 1 and 2; and up to 20 years of imprisonment on Counts 3, 4 and 5. He also faces a maximum fine of \$250,000 on Counts 1, 2 and 4, and \$1,000,000 on Counts 3 and 5.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Samuel A. Hurtado.

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