



PRESS RELEASE

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**FORMER FEDERAL CONTRACTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO
FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court, Lawrence Lucero, 65, of Tucumcari, N.M., pled guilty to a five-count indictment charging him with three counts of receipt of a visual depiction of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct and two counts of possession of matter containing visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Lucero entered his guilty plea without the benefit of a plea agreement.

According to the indictment, which was filed on July 10, 2012, Lucero received and possessed child pornography between March 26, 2012 and May 2, 2012 in Rio Arriba and San Miguel Counties, N.M. During that time period, Lucero was employed as a social worker by a company that provided healthcare staff at the Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinics in Las Vegas and Espanola, N.M., under a contract with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

At sentencing, Lucero faces imprisonment for not less than five years and not more than 40 years on each of the three counts charging him with receipt of child pornography. Lucero also faces a maximum ten years of imprisonment on each of the two counts charging him with possession of child pornography. After completing his prison sentence, Lucero will be required to serve a term of supervised release to be determined by the sentencing judge. He also will be required to register as a sex offender.

Lucero has been in federal custody since his arrest on July 18, 2012, and remains detained pending his sentencing hearing which has yet to be scheduled.

The case was investigated by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Charlyn E. Rees as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals, who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue

victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <http://www.justice.gov/psc/>.

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