

For Immediate Release
May 9, 2011

**NURSE PRACTITIONER PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE
OXYCODONE WITHOUT ANY LEGITIMATE MEDICAL PURPOSE**

ALBUQUERQUE – United States Attorney Kenneth Gonzales announced that **Gloria Vigil**, a 61-year-old nurse practitioner, has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute oxycodone outside the scope and usual course of professional practice and without a legitimate medical purpose. Vigil, an Albuquerque resident, entered her guilty plea this morning in federal court in Albuquerque under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. At sentencing, Vigil faces a maximum penalty of twenty-years' imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, and six years of supervised release. Vigil was remanded into the custody of the United States Marshal's Service at the conclusion of today's plea hearing, and will be detained pending her sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

Vigil and two co-defendants, **Ashley Gray**, 27, and **Angelica Ortega**, 25, were arrested on federal drug trafficking charges on July 21, 2010. The three women and co-defendant **Armando Montano**, 29, were charged in a five-count indictment filed on August 10, 2010. The indictment charged Vigil and her co-defendants as follows: Count 1, charging Vigil, Gray and Ortega with conspiracy to distribute oxycodone; Count 2, charging Vigil, Gray and Ortega with the unlawful distribution of oxycodone; Count 3, charging Montano with obtaining oxycodone by fraud, deception and subterfuge; and Counts 4 and 5, charging Vigil with the unlawful distribution of oxycodone.

According to the criminal complaint filed in the case, Vigil, Gray and Ortega were arrested as the result of a nine-month investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) into a prescription drug trafficking ring operating out of Vigil's medical office, *Clinica*

de la Gloria (Clinic of Glory), 1720 Bridge Boulevard SW, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The criminal complaint alleged that Vigil engaged in a pattern and practice of writing fraudulent prescriptions for oxycodone for individuals who were never treated by Vigil and did not have any medical provider-patient relationship with her medical office. It accused Vigil of selling the fraudulent prescriptions for up to \$250 each. Gray and Ortega were charged with conspiring with Vigil to distribute oxycodone.

In her plea agreement, Vigil stated that she operated her own medical clinic Albuquerque, and that, as a nurse practitioner, she was permitted by law to write prescriptions for controlled substances in the scope of her medical practice. Vigil acknowledged writing and providing prescriptions for oxycodone for individuals with whom she had no patient/provider relationship and for whom she did not believe such drugs were medically necessary. Vigil stated that these individuals would provide her with names and dates of birth of others in whose names she would write prescriptions. Vigil stated that, in order to avoid detection, she created patient charts in each of these names so as to make it appear that she had a legitimate patient/provider relationship with these individuals. In exchange for writing these prescriptions, Vigil, received payment in cash. Vigil said that Ortega and Gray participated in her unlawful oxycodone distribution scheme.

Vigil also admitted that, on two occasions in June 2010, she met with an individual for whom she had written numerous prescriptions for oxycodone in the past, and that, on these two occasions, she wrote a total of nine (9) prescriptions for oxycodone in various names provided to her by the individual. These prescriptions were written outside the scope of her medical practice and without any legitimate medical justification. Vigil later learned that this individual was working as an informant for the DEA.

Proceedings against Grey, Ortega and Montano are continuing. Charges in indictments are merely accusations, and criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John C. Anderson and was investigated by the DEA in cooperation with the Albuquerque Police Department, Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, New Mexico Board of Pharmacy, and the Albuquerque Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

For more information on oxycodone and other drugs, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the DEA El Paso Division encourage parents and their children to visit the following interactive DEA websites: www.justthinktwice.com, www.GetSmartAboutDrugs.com and www.dea.gov.

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