

January 24, 2014
For Immediate Release

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En Español

DA Charges Two with Conspiracy to Practice Medicine without a License

Defendants Using I-V Treatments on Patients at Avocado Ranch

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie Dumanis](#) today announced **Robert Oldham Young, 61**, and **Rocio “Rosie” Placencia, 32**, of Valley Center, have been charged with conspiracy to practice medicine without a license and multiple counts of grand theft. Young is a published author of the “The pH Miracle,” a diet designed to “alkalinize the body.” The charges allege Young and his cohorts ran afoul of the law when he went beyond advocating dietary changes and used intravenous treatments on patients housed on Young’s avocado ranch in Valley Center.

Young and Placencia, who were arrested Thursday by members of the U.S. Marshals San Diego Fugitive Task Force. Young is scheduled to be arraigned at 1:30 p.m. today in Department 12 of San Diego Superior Court on 18 felony counts. Young faces up to 15 years 8 months in state prison if convicted of all the charges. Placencia is scheduled to be arraigned on January 30 at 1:30 in Department 12 and is facing three years in county jail if convicted.

“Offering intravenous medical treatments in an unlicensed facility not equipped to handle terminally ill patients creates a public health risk,” DA Dumanis said. “Our Consumer Unit continues to prosecute individuals who are not licensed doctors and prey on those in our community who are sick, vulnerable and desperate to cure their illnesses.”

Young runs the “pH Miracle Center” in Valley Center. He advertises health retreats and medical diagnostic services on his website. Although not a medical facility, Young accepted patients, including terminally ill people, and housed them in temporary quarters on his avocado ranch.

The District Attorney’s Consumer Unit is prosecuting Young. He remains under investigation by the [Medical Board of California](#), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations, and the District Attorney’s Office, which believe there may be more victims. Anyone with information is asked to contact the District Attorney’s Office at 619-531-3507.

In a similar criminal case prosecuted by the District Attorney earlier this year, Keith Barton, a La Mesa man was convicted of multiple counts of practicing medicine without a license and grand

theft for offering a bogus cure for HIV and cancer. Barton is awaiting sentencing on February 10. Previous prosecutions by the Consumer Unit include Kathleen Helms, a San Diego woman who posed as a doctor and offered patients non-FDA-approved DMSO infusions as alternative remedies for autoimmune disorders, and Kurt Walter Donsbach, 75, who pleaded guilty to 13 felony charges, including practicing medicine without a license and selling misbranded drugs.

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