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QUEENS DOCTOR CHARGED WITH NO-FAULT INSURANCE FRAUD

Allegedly Billed Insurers for Costly Medical Tests Never Performed

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a medical doctor formerly employed at a Jamaica, Queens, medical clinic has been indicted by a Queens County grand jury for falsely billing insurance carriers over a nearly four-year period for costly medical tests never provided to motor vehicle accident victims. It is alleged that the defendant submitted old test results of other patients as “proof” that he did the tests.

District Attorney Brown said, “The cost of automobile insurance fraud is enormous – estimated by the insurance industry at \$30 billion nationwide each year. Such rip-offs hit the honest consumer squarely in the pocketbook by way of ever increasing insurance premiums. In New York, the typical motorist pays anywhere from \$300 to \$400 in higher premiums. Today’s arrest sends a clear message to those who are attempting to fleece the system for their own personal gain that law enforcement’s fight against insurance fraud is ongoing and that those who cheat will be sought out and vigorously prosecuted.”

The District Attorney said that under New York’s no-fault insurance law, a person injured in a motor vehicle accident can receive up to \$50,000 coverage for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident. Most health providers are reimbursed directly by the insurance carriers for services provided.

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Yakov Raufov, 44, of 21 Carlyle Drive in Glen Cove, Long Island, who practiced at L&B Medical, located at 153-25 Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, Queens. Raufov was arraigned today before Queens Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Holder on a 33-count felony indictment, charging him with twelve counts of fourth-degree insurance fraud, twelve counts of first-degree falsifying business records, eight counts of fourth-degree grand larceny and one count of first-degree scheme to defraud. The defendant, who faces up to four years in prison and loss of his license to practice medicine if convicted, was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on September 16, 2008.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, between August 2003 and April 2007, the defendant engaged in an insurance fraud scheme in which he submitted insurance claims for costly nerve conduction studies and needle electromyographs (“NCV/EMGs”) that, in fact, were not performed on twelve individuals. A NCV tests the flow of electrical currents across the nerves, and an EMG is a recording of the electrical activity in muscles and nerves. The defendant is alleged to have caused fraudulent claims for these unrendered and unnecessary medical tests to be submitted to a number of no-fault insurance companies in an amount totaling more than \$18,000.

The District Attorney noted that the matter would be referred to the New York State Department of Health's Office of Professional Medical Conduct for a review of the defendant's license to practice medicine.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Elizabeth A. Curcio and Edwin J. Driscoll of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, under the supervision of Lawrence J. Festa, Chief Investigator, and Albert D. Velardi, Deputy Chief Investigator, with assistance from Detective Jose Rodriguez, of the New York City Police Department's Organized Crime Investigation Division, under the supervision of Lieutenant Paul Frawley, and from the New York State Insurance Frauds Bureau, and Anthony Tardallo of National Insurance Crime Bureau.

District Attorney Brown also expressed his appreciation to the insurance industry for their assistance in the investigation, with special thanks to Richard D'Amato, of AllState Insurance, Barbara Ann Chapman, of GEICO, and Brian Cook, of Progressive Insurance.

Assistant District Attorney Robert E. Miller, of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, Marc P. Resnick, Deputy Chief, and Mary M. Lowenburg, Supervisor of the District Attorney's Auto Crime and Insurance Fraud Unit, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigation Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org