



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEVEN PLEAD GUILTY TO FORGING TRANSCRIPTS IN ORDER TO BECOME NURSES

SACRAMENTO – Seven people have pleaded guilty to charges of forgery for using fake transcripts to become licensed as Registered Nurses. All were arrested as a result of a multi-agency probe involving the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Division of Investigation (DOI), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Juan Malaluan Tenorio, Jr. and Glyn Cordova Villegas of Kern County, James Quijano Leoncio of Orange County, Philip Tolentino Sarmiento, Laurence Viernes, German Zagada and Jude Dagza Leoncio of Los Angeles County applied for licenses to practice as Registered Nurses in California using false and forged nursing school transcripts from the Philippines. They now face up to three years in prison.

"Protecting patient safety is the Board's top priority," said Louise Bailey, Executive Officer of the Board of Registered Nursing. "A nurse without the proper education could be dangerous to a patient."

The Division of Investigation worked with HSI, the Internal Revenue Services' Criminal Investigation Division and the California Board of Registered Nursing to investigate and arrest the seven. An eighth individual Joanne Keeney, the suspected-ringleader, currently resides in the Philippines. There is a warrant for her arrest.

"We are happy we were able to crack this ring of forgers and keep them from possibly harming patients," said Division of Investigation Chief Michael Gomez. "We would not have been able to do that without the cooperation from all of those working on the case at the Division of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security and the IRS."

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“IRS-Criminal Investigation (CI) is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to protect the American public both domestically and internationally,” said José M. Martínez, Special Agent in Charge, Oakland Field Office. “These crimes touched the lives of many unsuspecting citizens and the public should know that we will hold accountable those individuals who put personal financial gain through deceit above the safety and well-being of the public that we serve.”

“The diligent efforts by HSI special agents here in the Bay Area and the Philippines were instrumental in exposing this potentially dangerous scheme and eliminating a significant threat to public safety,” said Tatum King, acting special agent in charge for HSI San Francisco. “Without HSI’s global reach and its partnership with Philippine authorities, it would have been difficult to develop the evidence overseas needed to bring the charges in this case. This investigation illustrates yet again how communities benefit from HSI’s working relationships with local, state and foreign agencies.”

At the request of the Board of Registered Nursing, a Sacramento County Superior Court Judge has ordered Juan Malaluan Tenorio, Jr., Glyn Cordova Villegas, Philip Tolentino Sarmiento, Jude Dagza Leoncio, and James Quijano Leoncio not to practice as registered nurses.

The Board filed and served accusations against Juan Malaluan Tenorio Jr., Glyn Cordova Villegas, Philip Tolentino Sarmiento, Jude Dagza Leoncio and James Quijano Leoncio on May 16, 2014, and German Zagada on May 22, 2014 seeking revocation of their RN licenses.

All seven people are expected to be sentenced June 27, 2014.

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The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.dca.ca.gov.

The Board of Registered Nursing regulates the practice of registered nursing and certified advanced practice nurses in order to protect the public. The Board exists to protect the health and safety of consumers and promote quality registered nursing care in California.