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AG Balderas Secures Guilty Pleas Against ‘Vampire Facial’ Spa Owner Who Performed Unlicensed Medical Procedures on Individuals Who Later Contracted HIV

ALBUQUERQUE — Today, New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas announced that Maria de Lourdes Ramos de Ruiz, a former Albuquerque spa owner who conducted dangerous, unlicensed medical procedures on members of the general public, has pled guilty to five felony counts of practicing medicine without a license. Ramos de Ruiz was indicted by a Bernalillo County grand jury in April 2021 for performing ‘vampire facials’ and other unlicensed medical procedures on at least two individuals who later contracted HIV. Ruiz faces up to 7½ years in prison.

“This is a warning to those who place profit over the health and safety of New Mexico consumers, and I remain highly concerned that these procedures are not being regulated at the State and Federal level,” said Attorney General Balderas.

Ramos de Ruiz, who is not licensed to practice medicine, came to the attention of the New Mexico Department of Health after an individual who contracted HIV reported visiting and receiving a ‘vampire facial’ at the spa owned and operated by Ramos de Ruiz. An inspection by DOH and the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department revealed numerous health-code violations, including unsafe infection-control practices, unwrapped needles, improper blood disposal, and unlabeled syringes next to food in a refrigerator.

In addition to performing vampire facials, Ramos de Ruiz performed illegal plasma and Botox-injection procedures. Following the DOH inspection, a second individual who contracted HIV after visiting the spa also came forward. The New Mexico Medical Board then referred this case to the Office of the Attorney General for investigation and prosecution.

The case was investigated by New Mexico Office of the Attorney General Special Agent Gregory Buhl, and was prosecuted by Assistant Attorneys General Zach Jones and Jesse Pecoraro.

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