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Pediatrician Convicted of Possessing Child Pornography Videos Receives 14 Months Incarceration

Albuquerque, NM – Today, a Bernalillo County jury found Juan Santos Torres guilty of one count of Sexual Exploitation of Children by Possession despite the defendant possessing numerous videos of children being sexually abused. Santos Torres was previously a licensed pediatrician in Pennsylvania and in Texas, and was working on his application for a medical license in New Mexico. Santos Torres faced only a fraction of the charges prosecutors believed they should have been able to charge, based on the recent Supreme Court case law. Bernalillo County District Court Judge Brown imposed 14 of the 18 months allowed by law, and also sentenced him to the maximum amount of probation.

“We continue to prosecute these important cases despite the limitations of the law, and we appreciate the hard work in this case of our prosecutors, special agents, the Bernalillo County Sheriff’s Department, and the Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory. Our priority is protecting New Mexico children and families and we are pleased that this defendant will serve a prison sentence, followed by lifetime sex offender registration,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “I continue to call upon the legislature and the governor to work with me to allow courts to impose more appropriate sentences for the sexual exploitation of children.”

The New Mexico Supreme Court determined that the language of the state’s Sexual Exploitation of Children law needs clarification as to the “unit of prosecution” allowed, clarifying whether each depiction of a child engaged in a prohibited sexual act can be charged as a separate crime. A clarifying amendment unanimously passed the state House of Representatives, but the 2015 New Mexico Legislature ended without amending the law to correct the problems identified by the Supreme Court. Attorney General Hector Balderas has requested that Governor Susana Martinez consider the legislation as a priority for the next legislative session in January.

Please see attached for a booking photo of Santos Torres.

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