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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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D.A. BROWN: 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 physician employed at a Jamaica, Queens, medical clinic has been charged with insurance fraud for allegedly falsely billing insurance carriers under New York's no-fault law for costly medical tests never provided to motor vehicle accident victims. He is the second doctor at the clinic to be charged with insurance fraud in less than a month.

District Attorney Brown said, "No-fault fraud and abuse is a billion dollar a year business in New York fueled by unethical health care professionals. Such rip-offs are costing the typical New York motorist \$300 to \$400 a year in higher insurance premiums and are the major reason why New York's automobile insurance coverage costs an average of nearly \$2,000 per driver, the second highest in the nation. Yesterday's arrest sends a clear message to those who are attempting to use 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 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 Alexander Israeli, 53, of 61-59 Dry Harbor Road in Middle Village, Queens, who practices at L&B Medical, located at 153-25 Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, Queens. The defendant was arraigned last night before Queens Criminal Court Judge Alex J. Zigman on charges of third-degree grand larceny, third-degree insurance fraud and first-degree falsifying business records. The defendant, who faces up to seven years in prison if convicted and the loss of his medical license, was ordered released without bail and to return to court on June 17, 2007.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the criminal court complaint, between January and December 2006, the defendant submitted insurance claims for costly nerve conduction studies and needle electromyographs ("NCV/EMGs") that, in fact, were not performed on seven 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 \$21,000.

Among the insurance companies allegedly victimized by the defendant's scheme were GMAC Insurance Company, KEMPER Auto and Home Insurance, AllState Insurance Company and GEICO Insurance.

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.

According to District Attorney Brown, Dr. Yakov Raufov, a physician who also practices at L&B Medical, was charged on May 22, 2007, with third- and fourth-degree grand larceny, third- and fourth-degree insurance fraud and first-degree falsifying business records. Raufov, 43, of 21 Carlyle Drive in Glen Cove, Long Island, faces up to seven years in prison if convicted. His case is presently pending in Queens Criminal Court.

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 Investigator Gary Anderson of the New York State Insurance Frauds Bureau, Investigator Anthony Tardalo of the National Insurance Crime Bureau, and Detective Jose Rodriguez, of the Fraudulent Accident Investigation Squad, which is under the supervision of Sergeant John Schroeder and Lieutenant Paul Frawley, and the overall supervision of Inspector Brian O'Neill of the Organized Crime Investigation Division.

District Attorney Brown also expressed his appreciation to the insurance industry for their assistance in the investigation with special thanks to Special Investigators Louis Pagnotta and Wayne Behnken of One Beacon Insurance Company, Max Esty of GMAC Insurance, Paul Rudy of KEMPER Auto and Home Insurance, Richard D'Amato of AllState Insurance, and Barbara Ann Chapman of GEICO Insurance. He would also like to express his appreciation to Special Investigators Gerard LaRocco of Met Life Insurance, Nichole Matthews of Auto One Insurance, Ann Flattery of St. Paul Travelers Insurance, Steven Hayden of The Hartford Insurance and Brian Cook of Progressive Insurance, and James Potts, Director of the Special Investigations Unit of the New York Central Mutual Insurance Company.

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 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 a criminal complaint 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