



**RICHARD A. BROWN**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
QUEENS COUNTY  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568  
718-286-6000**

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**CONTACT:** KEVIN RYAN  
NICOLE NAVAS  
MERIS CAMPBELL  
(718)286-6315

**D.A. BROWN: QUEENS BEAUTICIAN CHARGED WITH UNLAWFULLY  
PRACTICING MEDICINE AND SERIOUSLY INJURING CLIENTS**

*Allegedly Endangered Patients by Injecting Them With Silicone Which Caused Facial Disfigurement*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a beautician at a Flushing spa has been charged with unlawfully practicing medicine and endangering the lives of two customers by providing them with cosmetic injections which resulted in infections and facial disfigurement.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendant is accused of causing great bodily harm to two women by performing medical procedures without a license. Her alleged conduct was both dangerous and reprehensible because it exploited the vanity of individuals seeking a younger-looking appearance at a reasonable cost and caused both her victims to suffer permanent scarring – both physically and emotionally – and to undergo multiple facial surgeries."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendant as Patricia Villegas, 53, of 43-30 147<sup>th</sup> Street in Flushing. The defendant is the president of Altiva New York, Temple of Beauty and Renewal, which is located at the same address as her residence. She has been charged with second-degree assault, unauthorized practice of medicine, first-degree scheme to defraud and second-degree reckless endangerment. If convicted, she faces up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown noted that the investigation is continuing and requested that others treated by the defendant to contact his office at 718-286-6673. Altiva New York Spa, in Flushing, formerly did business as Altiva Medical Spa at 1540 York Avenue in Manhattan.

The District Attorney said that, according to the criminal charges, while providing facial treatments at the Altiva New York Spa, the defendant told two women – who at the time were 26 and 29, respectively – on separate occasions that she could administer facial injections to address various facial imperfections. Based on the defendant's suggestions, the women allegedly met with the defendant at the Altiva Spa on various occasions between November 2002 and December 2003, during which times the defendant allegedly unlawfully practiced medicine by injecting substances into various parts of the women's faces. The defendant allegedly claimed that the substances were redoff, restylane (which is used to treat wrinkles as well as lip enhancement), collagen (a dermal filler used to fill wrinkles, lines, scars, and for lip enhancement) and cortisone (sometimes used to reduce post-operative inflammation).

The District Attorney added that, according to the charges, after receiving the treatments, the women began experiencing substantial pain and physical injuries, including infections, swelling, distortions on their faces and lips and, in the case of the 29-year-old woman, burning and the loss of lip function. The women, it is alleged, have since undergone multiple facial surgeries and have permanent scarring to their faces and hard lumps under their skin. The substances removed from the women's face during the surgeries was consistent with silicone. In each case, the women allegedly paid the defendant more than \$1,000 for the procedures she performed on them and were told by the defendant that she worked along with her brother, Dr. Pablo Villegas, – although he was never present during any of their visits nor did they ever see or speak to him. Dr. Villegas is a licensed New York State psychiatrist and the vice president of Altiva New York.

District Attorney Brown said that defendant was arrested today and is being held pending arraignment later today in Queens County Criminal Court.

The District Attorney expressed his appreciation to the New York State Department of Education's Office of Professional Discipline, for referring the matter to his office.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Richard A. Lewis and Jerome D. Pugh, of the District Attorney's Detective Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant John W. Kenna and Lieutenant Robert J. Burke and the overall supervision of Chief Lawrence J. Festa and Deputy Chief Albert D. Velardi.

Assistant District Attorney Jason P. Garelick, of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that criminal charges are merely an accusation and that defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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