



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 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.

District Attorney Brown said, "No-fault fraud and abuse is a billion dollar a year business in New York fueled by crooked 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. Today's arrest sends a clear message to those who are attempting to fleece 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 Yakov Raufov, 43, of 21 Carlyle Drive in Glen Cove, Long Island, who practices at L&B Medical, located at 153-25 Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, Queens. He is being held pending arraignment later today in Queens Criminal Court on charges of third- and fourth-degree grand larceny, third- and fourth-degree insurance fraud and first-degree falsifying business records. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, between May 2004 and September 2005, the defendant submitted insurance claims for costly nerve conduction studies and needle electromyographs ("NCV/EMGs") that, in fact, were not performed on five 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 \$10,000.

Among the insurance companies allegedly victimized by the defendant's scheme were Unitrin Insurance Company, AllState Insurance Company and Hartford Insurance Company.

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.

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 the New York State Insurance Frauds Bureau, 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 Deputy 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, Paul Rudy, of Unitrin Insurance, and Richard D'Amato, of AllState Insurance, and Gina Santos, a representative of Hartford Insurance.

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 and Marc P. Resnick, Deputy Chief, 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