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**D.A. BROWN: QUEENS ESTHETICIAN CONVICTED OF UNLAWFULLY  
PRACTICING MEDICINE AND SERIOUSLY INJURING CLIENTS**

*Faces Up To 14 Years In Prison For Assault, Reckless Endangerment And Other Charges*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that an esthetician at a Flushing spa has been convicted of 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 caused great bodily harm to two women by performing medical procedures without a license. She offered the false promise of being able to provide the victims with a more beautiful, youthful appearance. Instead, her actions caused both of 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, 54, of 43-30 147th Street in Flushing. The defendant is the president of Altiva New York, Temple of Beauty and Renewal, which was located at the same address as her residence and 1540 York Avenue, Suite 1A, in Manhattan. She has been convicted of second-degree assault, unauthorized practice of a profession, first-degree scheme to defraud, second-degree reckless endangerment, and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

District Attorney Brown said the defendant was convicted yesterday afternoon following a jury trial and immediately had her bail revoked by Queens Supreme Court Justice Richard L. Buchter, who set sentencing for November 7, 2008. The defendant faces up to 14 years in prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to trial testimony, while providing facial treatments at the Altiva Spa, the defendant told two women – who at the time were approximately in their mid-twenties – she could administer facial injections to address various facial imperfections. Based on the defendant's suggestions, the women met with the defendant at the Altiva Spa in Flushing on various occasions between January 1, 2002 and November 30, 2003, during which times the defendant 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), cortisone (sometimes used to reduce post-operative inflammation) and kenalog (used to reduce inflammation).

The District Attorney added that, according to the testimony, after receiving the treatments, the women began experiencing substantial pain and physical injuries, including infections, swelling, distortions on their faces and lips. Both women's lips were deformed and their lip functions were impaired, including their ability to eat, drink and speak. The women 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 faces during the surgeries was consistent with silicone. The women paid the defendant more than \$2,000 combined 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.

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 Allison P. Wright and Quynnda L. Fleming, of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau, prosecuted 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.

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