



U.S. Department of Justice
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PRESS RELEASE

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**FEDERAL INDICTMENT CHARGES EIGHT ALBUQUERQUE RESIDENTS
WITH ILLEGAL DISTRIBUTION OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

ALBUQUERQUE – This afternoon, the U.S. District Court unsealed a 32-count federal indictment charging eight Albuquerque residents with the illegal distribution of prescription painkillers and other related offenses. The indictment was announced by U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Joseph M. Arabit, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA's El Paso Division.

The indictment is the result of a DEA investigation into a prescription drug trafficking ring operating out of the Albuquerque metropolitan area. The investigation was designated as part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program, a nationwide Department of Justice program that combines the resources and unique expertise of federal agencies, along with their local counterparts, in a coordinated effort to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations.

This morning, the DEA arrested the following eight defendants who are named in the indictment: **Eric Anaya**, 33, **Javier Sanchez**, 29, **Michelle Archuleta**, 41, **Roseanna Barreras**, 29, **Ida Munoz**, 56, **John Garcia**, 33, **Christina Brown**, 36, and **Jessica Santiago**, 40. Garcia and Brown made their initial appearances in federal court earlier this afternoon. The remaining six defendants will make their initial appearances tomorrow morning.

During today's arrest operation, the DEA also executed four search warrants at residences in Albuquerque. Among other things, the DEA seized several hundred dosage units of

pharmaceuticals and a small indoor marijuana grow of approximately ten to fifteen plants, and two vehicles.

Count 1 of the indictment charges Anaya, Sanchez, Archuleta, Garcia and Brown with conspiracy to distribute Oxycodone and Hydrocodone. Anaya also is charged with 13 counts of illegally distributing Oxycodone and Hydrocodone; Barreras is charged with five counts of illegally distributing Oxycodone; Archuleta is charged with three counts of illegally distributing Oxycodone and Hydrocodone; and Sanchez and Munoz each is charged with two counts of illegally distributing Oxycodone. Anaya, Archuleta, Barreras, Garcia, Brown and Santiago are charged with using communication devices, telephones, to facilitate the commission of drug trafficking crimes (sometimes referred to as “phone counts”).

The maximum penalty for a conviction on the conspiracy count and each of the distribution counts is twenty years of imprisonment and a \$1 million fine. The maximum penalty for a conviction on each of the phone counts is four years of imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

In announcing the indictment, U.S. Attorney Gonzales emphasized, “Prescription drug abuse is deadly.” He explained that, “It is the nation’s fastest growing drug problem, and has reached epidemic proportions when it comes to teens and young adults. The prescription drugs most commonly abused by teens are painkillers like Oxycodone and Hydrocodone, the drugs allegedly trafficked by the defendants in this case. Here in New Mexico, the trend is for teens to transition from painkillers like Oxycodone to heroin, a drug that provides a similar high for less money, sometimes with tragic consequences. As a community, we must work together to educate children, parents and teachers about the perils of prescription drug abuse while the law enforcement community continues to investigate and prosecute those who are illegally trafficking these deadly substances.”

“The diversion and abuse of prescription drugs, including Oxycodone, Hydrocodone and Xanax, have tragic results, especially among our youth. Too often, the abuse of these drugs leads to shattered lives and even death. For this reason, DEA and our local law enforcement partners are committed to stopping those who deal illegally in addictive pharmaceuticals,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Arabit.

The case was investigated by the DEA’s Albuquerque office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicholas J. Ganjei.

Charges in indictments are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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