

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Governor

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Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JOINT INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARRESTS IN MARTIN COUNTY

TALLAHASSEE— The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) West Palm Beach-Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Unit announced the arrest of Lynnette Blake of the Back to Eden Wellness Center in Stuart. A joint investigation with the Martin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) arrested Blake on twelve counts: five for the unlicensed practice of a health care profession, five for the unlicensed practice of naturopathy, and two counts for the unlicensed practice of dentistry. Each of these is a third degree felony and punishable by up to five years in prison. Additionally, DOH issued cease and desist orders to Blake for the unlicensed practice of medicine, naturopathy and dentistry. DOH also issued Blake three uniform unlicensed activity citations.

On August 6th, a search warrant was executed by MCSO for Back to Eden Wellness Center, where Blake told members of DOH and MCSO that she was a naturopathy doctor practicing naturopathic medicine. Blake claimed that as a member of the Pastoral Medical Association, she was exempt from Florida laws requiring licensing for health care professions. Several arriving patients were also interviewed. Two of the patients stated Blake had performed dental services on them, including placing teeth bleaching substances into their mouths.

The joint operation began after several victims filed complaints with DOH alleging Blake practiced health care professions without a license. One such complaint claimed that while under Blake's supervision, a clinic employee took numerous vials of blood, causing the patient to nearly faint. The patient requested ambulatory transfer to an emergency room, at which time Blake and the employee failed to contact medical services and instead gave the patient water and kiwi fruit from their own lunch bags. During the course of the investigation, multiple undercover operations were conducted by DOH and MCSO involving an undercover ULA investigator seeking treatment at the facility.

DOH has several resources to combat unlicensed activity. Consumers are encouraged to use the DOH web site, www.flhealthsource.com, to view licensing information for health care practitioners. Complaints may be filed anonymously by completing and mailing the complaint form on the DOH site, or by calling 1-877-HALT-ULA.

The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) unlicensed activity program protects Florida residents and visitors from the potentially serious and dangerous consequences of receiving health care services from an unlicensed person. The Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) investigates and refers for prosecution all unlicensed health care activity complaints and allegations. The unlicensed activity unit works in conjunction with law enforcement and the state attorney's offices to prosecute individuals practicing without a license. In many instances, unlicensed activity is a felony level criminal offense. More importantly, receiving health care from unlicensed people is dangerous and could result in further injury, disease or even death.

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