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## JOINT INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARREST IN FORT PIERCE



Contact:

Communications Office

[NewsMedia@flhealth.gov](mailto:NewsMedia@flhealth.gov)

850-245-4111

**Tallahassee, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health’s Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Jupiter Office announced that their joint investigation with law enforcement led to the arrest of Nereida Lopez for the alleged operation of an unlicensed pharmacy, Syam Petroleum Inc. d/b/a Sam’s Market.

The joint operation was conducted by Florida Department of Health investigators and law enforcement agents at Sam’s Market, located at 7049 Okeechobee Road in Fort Pierce. In addition to her arrest by law enforcement, the department issued Ms. Lopez a notice to cease and desist from practicing as a pharmacist without being duly licensed.

Consumers are encouraged to use the department’s website [www.flhealthsource.gov](http://www.flhealthsource.gov) where they can conveniently view the license information of their health care practitioner. Complaints may be filed anonymously by completing and mailing the complaint form on the Florida Department of Health’s Web site, calling 1-877-HALT-ULA, or emailing [HALTULA@flhealth.gov](mailto:HALTULA@flhealth.gov).

The department’s Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) investigates and refers for prosecution all unlicensed health care activity complaints and allegations. The ULA 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.

Working in conjunction with 22 boards and six councils, MQA regulates seven types of facilities and 200-plus license types in more than 40 health care professions. MQA evaluates the credentials of all applicants for licensure, issues licenses, analyzes and investigates complaints, inspects facilities, assists in prosecuting practice act violations, combats unlicensed activity and provides credential and discipline history about licensees to the public. Visit: [www.flhealthsource.gov](http://www.flhealthsource.gov) for additional information about MQA.

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