

Mission:

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



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HALTS THE UNLICENSED PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

~DOH stops Florida college from promoting unlicensed field of practice~

TALLAHASSEE- The Florida Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with the Department of Education (DOE) and local law enforcement partners, have worked to prevent the unlicensed practice of medicine. In a statewide effort known as “Operation Vandal”, Department investigators for the Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Office identified four unlicensed persons calling themselves “Orthopedic Physician’s Assistants” or OPAs and practicing as Physician’s Assistants (PA) in hospitals, clinics and doctor’s offices around the state. An Orthopedic Physician’s Assistant license does not exist under Florida law, and these perpetrators were not eligible for licensure as PAs in Florida.

Several of those cited were also teaching an “Orthopedic Physician’s Assistants” course at a college in St. Augustine. The investigation is ongoing and the Department continues to partner with DOE and law enforcement agencies to identify additional suspects and inform students that they cannot practice as a PA without proper education and licensure.

Arlow Bailey, John Bent, Jason Mazza, and Evilio Prendes were issued citations for the practice of medicine without a license. This continuing investigation reached as far as Texas and California and is another example of DOH’s commitment to identify, track and shutdown unlicensed medical and dental practices in Florida.

Individuals who believe they were potentially treated by or know of an unlicensed OPA are encouraged to contact the Florida Department of Health’s Unlicensed Activity hotline at 1-877-HALT-ULA or email at: HALTULA@doh.state.fl.us.

All residents are encouraged to verify the license of every health care provider before any treatment through our online licensure verification system. For more information or to verify the license of a health care practitioner, please visit <http://ww2.doh.state.fl.us/IRM00PRAES/PRASLIST.ASP>.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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Florida Department of Health

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