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## JOINT INVESTIGATION LEADS TO MULTIPLE ARRESTS IN VERO BEACH



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**— The Florida Department of Health’s Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Jupiter Office announced that their joint investigation with law enforcement led to the arrests of multiple individuals at multiple locations in Vero Beach. Syed Ahmer Raza, Sultana Razia and Mohammed Zahid Hossain Arshad were arrested for the alleged operation of pharmacies without the proper license, which is a third degree felony and punishable by up to one year in jail.

The joint operation was conducted at three different locations throughout Vero Beach: J&J Citgo at 1005 21<sup>st</sup> Street; Kwik Stop #1401 Inc. at 1401 16<sup>th</sup> Street; and Express Food Mart 2 at 632 Old Dixie Highway SW. Undercover law enforcement agents conducted multiple purchases of prescription-strength male enhancement products over the counter without first presenting a prescription. These establishments were operating as pharmacies without active, valid pharmacy licenses or permits issued by the State of Florida.

The Florida Department of Health issued Syed Ahmer Raza, Sultana Razia and Mohammed Zahid Hossain Arshad notices to cease and desist from operating pharmacies without pharmacy establishment licenses and from practicing as pharmacists without the proper licensing. The department also issued notices to cease and desist to Norul Islam and Halima Begum, owners of Kwik Stop #1401 Inc. for aiding and abetting the unlicensed operation of a pharmacy. Aminul Islam and Haroun Or Rashid, owners of Express Food Mart 2, were also given notices to cease and desist for aiding and abetting the unlicensed operation of a pharmacy.

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 professional. Complaints may be filed anonymously by completing and mailing the complaint form on the Florida Department of Health’s website, 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: <http://www.flhealthsource.gov> for additional information about MQA.

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