



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MAN ARRESTED FOR IMPERSONATING PHARMACIST

Investigators seek additional victims of Southern California resident



SACRAMENTO, CA -- A Whittier man will appear in Los Angeles County Superior Court on August 24, 2017, to face charges of identity theft, forgery and counterfeiting.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office has charged Benito Plascencia with one felony count of false personation, one felony count of identity theft, two felony counts of forgery relating to identity theft, one felony count of counterfeiting a seal and one misdemeanor count of false representation as a pharmacist. He also faces one felony count for theft of identifying information with a prior conviction of identity theft. His bail was set at \$70,000.

Plascencia was arrested on July 31, 2017, by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security while he was trying to cross the border from Mexico into California, at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. Plascencia was arrested on a warrant obtained in May by the Investigation and Enforcement Unit – Chatsworth Field Office of the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Division of Investigation. The arrest was the result of an investigation into allegations that Plascencia had been impersonating a licensed pharmacist and working at pharmacies in the Los Angeles area.

Investigators found that since 2001, Plascencia has worked at numerous pharmacies using the name and license number of a licensed pharmacist without the licensed pharmacist's knowledge. To gain employment, Plascencia used a falsified driver license, pharmacist license and social security card that were issued in the name of the licensed pharmacist.

In 2007, Plascencia was charged with three felony counts of identity theft, one felony count of possession of a forged or counterfeit document, and one misdemeanor count of dispensing dangerous drugs without a license. Plascencia was alleged to have impersonated three doctors and was also alleged to have impersonated the same licensed pharmacist he is currently charged with impersonating. Plascencia pleaded no contest to one count of identity theft and was ordered to serve jail time and pay restitution.

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He was also ordered not to be involved in any manner with the selling of prescribed medications in a pharmaceutical-like business or other business involving prescribed medicines.

From 1994 to 2010, Plascencia held a pharmacy technician license with the California State Board of Pharmacy, but he never applied for or received a pharmacist license. His pharmacy technician license was revoked following his 2007 conviction. Details from that case can be read here: <http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/enforcement/fy0809/ac083229.pdf>

Investigators believe there may be more victims of Plascencia's in the Los Angeles area. Anyone with information or who may have hired Plascencia is asked to contact Investigator Scott Vredenburg at the Division of Investigation's Chatsworth Office at (818) 885-2000.

The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers can file complaints against licensees by contacting the Department of Consumer Affairs at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.dca.ca.gov.

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