



**Office of the
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for the City of New York**

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Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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**Father and son charged with running prescription
drug trafficking and forgery ring**

\$1.5 million in painkillers funnelled onto black market

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, James J. Hunt, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Division (DEA), Steven Banks, Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA), and New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard A. Zucker announced today the indictment and arrests of accused drug kingpin NELSON QUEZADA SR. and his son RIQUELVIN QUEZADA for running a prescription drug trafficking ring that forged and filled prescriptions for approximately \$1.5 million in oxycodone, a highly addictive opioid painkiller.

An indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor charges NELSON QUEZADA SR., 53, with Operating as a Major Trafficker under New York State's drug kingpin statute, the only state drug charge that carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. Both NELSON and RIQUELVIN QUEZADA, 24, are charged with Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree, Unlawful Possession of an Official New York State Prescription Form and 70 counts each of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree.

The father and son team were arrested at their home this morning at 1134 Stratford Avenue, Apt. 1E, in the Bronx as a result of an investigation by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, the DEA New York Division, the New York City Human Resource Administration (HRA) and the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE).

From September 2010 to September 2014, the QUEZADAs allegedly oversaw an extensive prescription drug trafficking network that acquired blank prescription paper, printed forged prescriptions, and filled them at pharmacies to obtain pills for resale.

The QUEZADAS recruited and paid numerous individuals, known as "runners," to fill fraudulent oxycodone prescriptions at pharmacies in the Bronx and elsewhere. The runners consisted primarily of Medicaid patients who lived in the same Bronx neighborhood as the QUEZADAS. The runners were paid at most a few hundred dollars per prescription filled in exchange for providing the pills to the QUEZADAS. The pills were then bundled for sale on the black market, where the pills from a single prescription could be resold for thousands of dollars.

The investigation identified 464 forged prescriptions for oxycodone that had been printed on official prescription paper illegally obtained from a host of medical facilities, ranging from hospitals to small group practices. The 464 prescriptions yielded more than 51,000 oxycodone pills at 30 mg strength. Each of these pills carries an illegal street value of up to \$30 for a total value of more than \$1.5 million.

Forged prescriptions bore names of doctors who were generally not associated with the institutions from which the prescription paper had been obtained. Investigators determined that the prescription drug ring used the names of these doctors indiscriminately, and that the doctors were not involved in the fraudulent activity. Most of the prescriptions bore a phone number that investigators believe was answered by a member of the drug ring in the event a pharmacy called to verify a prescription's legitimacy.

The scheme began to unravel in early 2013 when HRA investigators became aware of a pattern of prescription forgeries, and investigators worked for years to determine the scope of this conspiracy.

Four members of the drug trafficking ring were previously arrested in connection with the scheme. Additional arrests are expected.

NELSON QUEZADA SR. faces the charge of Operating as a Major Trafficker based on the legal theory that he possessed a narcotic drug with a total aggregate value of \$75,000 or more from narcotics sales during a period of six consecutive months. The investigation revealed that he in fact collected oxycodone pills worth more than \$220,000 between August 1, 2012 and January 31, 2013.

NELSON QUEZADA SR. and RIQUELVIN QUEZADA are expected to be arraigned today in Manhattan Supreme Court before Judge Michael R. Sonberg.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked her office's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, DEA New York Division, the New York City Human Resource

Administration and the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement for their work on the case.

Bridget G. Brennan said, "This father son team is charged with flooding the black market with more than a million dollars' worth of addictive pills, opening the gateway for a flood of new heroin addicts. Their elaborate scheme evolved over four years, involved prescription paper stolen from multiple medical facilities and resulted in the Major Trafficker indictment Nelson Quezada Sr. is facing."

DEA Special Agent in Charge James J. Hunt stated, "Set up like a traditional drug trafficking crew, this family business sold millions of dollars' worth of diverted oxycodone pills to New Yorkers. Taking advantage of the high demand for opioids - by both traffickers and addicts - the Quezadas allegedly forged stolen prescriptions, scammed pharmacies and oversaw the day to day oxy distribution and profit. By collaborating resources, law enforcement was able to identify, investigate and dismantle this significant oxycodone trafficking organization."

HRA Commissioner Steven Banks said, "The individuals arrested exploited the Medicaid patients they employed as runners, deceived a host of medical facilities and pharmacies and gamed the system for their own financial gain."

"I commend the HRA investigators who alerted authorities to these activities and worked closely on the investigation by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, the DEA New York Division and the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement. Their efforts resulted in bringing to justice these individuals who have betrayed the public's trust and exploited those in need."

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard A. Zucker said, "The addiction to opioids, including heroin, has given rise to a major public health problem that is made worse by the illicit activities of these individuals. Their arrest will help reduce the influx of these drugs into the community but their actions have worsened the epidemic of opioid abuse."

INDICTED DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Nelson Quezada Sr.	Operating as a Major Trafficker Conspiracy 4 th Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument 2 nd – 70 cts CPCS 3 rd – 70 cts Unlawful Possession of an Official New York State Prescription Form – 1 ct
Riquelvin Quezada	Conspiracy 4 th Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument 2 nd – 70 cts CPCS 3 rd – 70 cts Unlawful Possession of an Official New York State Prescription Form – 1 ct

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed

innocent until proven guilty.