

BUST 10 IN QUACKDOWN

NEWS SPURS SWEEP THRU CHINATOWN

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State authorities yesterday launched a major crackdown on unlicensed practitioners posing as doctors and dentists to treat patients in New York's Chinese immigrant community. Armed with warrants, police swept into medical offices across Chinatown to arrest nine alleged charlatans found to be treating patients, along with a licensed physician who allegedly presided over a botched, nearly fatal abortion. Five other targets including a leader of a Chinatown tong and his wife were being sought by police.

The investigation that led to the arrests was sparked by a Daily News series that revealed that scores of unlicensed, untrained individuals were treating patients, often under unsafe conditions. "As a result of the Daily News' articles, our investigators got together with the state Department of Education. Their stories were the impetus that got us going," said Attorney General Dennis Vacco. "The Daily News really energized us."

The News' six-month investigation disclosed that the fake doctors advertised heavily in Chinese-language newspapers, often making sensational claims of treatments and cures for cancer and liver disease and painless surgery. The alleged charlatans performed procedures, including surgery and abortions. Many dispensed drugs.

The News' probe aided by researchers who went undercover also discovered patients who were blinded, disfigured and paralyzed. Those charged yesterday included Eugene Schwalben, 78, a licensed physician, and Lisa Lu, his unlicensed aide at an abortion clinic who advertised as Dr. Ting Deng. The two were described in the News' series as leaving a patient, hemorrhaging and unconscious, in a hallway after a botched abortion.

Also charged was Yong Dian-Li, a convicted sex offender and self-proclaimed hemorrhoid expert, who tried to convince a News researcher to let him apply his remedy in an intimate way. Those being sought include Aiwah Qi known in Chinatown as "The Liver Lady," who advertised on Chinese-language cable-TV as a "doctor" offering a "guaranteed cure" for liver cancer. The News bought a bottle of the medicine from Qi, who has no medical credentials, at her Sheng-Sheng Medical Clinic on Lafayette St. A lab later analyzed the active ingredient. It was aspirin.

Qi is married to Shon-Chuck Ng, a leader of the Hip Sing tong, which the U.S. government has linked to violent Asian organized crime. Ng, who advertised as a urologist, is also wanted based on a complaint from a patient alleging that he charged \$2,000 to treat an alleged liver disease. When the symptoms worsened, the patient consulted a real physician who diagnosed him with gallstones, according to the complaint.

After The News' series, a state hotline got more than 100 complaints from the Chinese community. The complaints led investigators to discover more unlicensed doctors, dentists and acupuncturists allegedly treating patients. In one case, authorities said, a woman reported that Chin Fai Ling, an unlicensed doctor, sexually abused her during a gynecological exam. When state investigators sent her back to Ling's office on Lafayette St., wearing a wire, he allegedly greeted her by fondling her breasts.

The 10 suspects arrested were to be arraigned today on charges of unauthorized practice of medicine, which can bring up to four years in jail on each count. Ling was also hit with sex abuse charges.

"After reading the articles in the Daily News exposing atrocities in Chinatown by illegal medical practitioners, I promised to commit my resources to arresting them," said Johanna Duncan-Poitier, who heads the state Education Department's license enforcement division. "I am proud to say that my office, along with the attorney general's office, have made these arrests, and we will continue pursuing these highly dangerous impostors.

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