

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

CARMEL WOMAN FOUND GUILTY OF FORGING A PRESCRIPTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that on February 3, 2016, Mary Grace Royster, age 40, was found guilty by a jury of forging a prescription for narcotics. The case was heard by Superior Court Judge Efren Iglesia.

On July 22, 2015, Royster entered the emergency department of the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula with complaints of back pain. Royster was examined and referred to a specialist, who wrote Royster a prescription for a low dose of Percocet, a Schedule II narcotic painkiller. Royster went directly to a pharmacy and attempted to fill the prescription with an altered prescription. The pharmacist immediately noticed that both the quantity and strength appeared to have been altered and called 911.

Schedule II narcotics have a high potential for abuse which may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. In Monterey County, prescription drug related deaths now exceed motor vehicle related deaths. In response, local law enforcement, hospitals, physicians, and the Office of the District Attorney created the Prescribe Safe initiative. Prescribe Safe is meant to guide, educate, and provide resources for local physicians and patients in the safe use of prescription medications and promote safe and effective pain management in Monterey County.

The defendant will be sentenced by Judge Iglesia on February 11, 2016. Royster faces a maximum sentence of 1 year in the county jail.

The case was investigated by Seaside Police Officer Jeffrey Higgins, in partnership with Casey Grover, M.D., and Sameer Bakhda, M.D., Emergency Department Medical Director of the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula.

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