

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

**PRUNEDALE WOMAN SENTENCED
FOR INSURANCE FRAUD,
PRESCRIPTION FORGERY, AND THEFT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Prunedale resident Yvette Brown, age 38, was sentenced by Judge Andrew Liu for insurance fraud, forging and altering a narcotic prescription, and theft of blank prescription pads. Brown was placed on three years of felony probation, ordered to serve 210 days in custody, be subject to search and seizure, register as a narcotics offender, and pay victim restitution. Brown pled guilty on March 21, 2018.

Brown was employed as an office assistant at a physician's office in Monterey from May 26, 2016 through August 4, 2017. During her employment, she took blank prescription pads from her employer and forged at least six prescriptions for hydrocodone, a highly addictive opiate narcotic, for a total amount of 1,080 pills. Brown went into pharmacies throughout Monterey County and filled the prescriptions by using her employer provided health insurance plan of Anthem Blue Cross to pay for the cost of the prescriptions.

As required by law, when she obtained the controlled substances from the pharmacy, the pharmacy entered her name into the CURES (Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System) database. CURES is California's prescription drug monitoring program. It is a database of scheduled controlled substance prescriptions dispensed in California serving the public health, regulatory oversight agencies, and law enforcement. This system alerted the physician that Brown had been prescribed a large quantity of controlled substances. The physician knew that she did not prescribe the prescriptions for Brown, so she contacted the Monterey Police Department.

In November of 2017, the Prescribe Safe Initiative and the Monterey County Pharmacists' Coalition sponsored the semi-annual Prescription Drug Abuse and Diversion Summit. This allowed the medical community, retail pharmacists and law enforcement to work together to create awareness and prevent the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs in Monterey County. At the summit, this case was brought to the attention of the Monterey County District Attorney's Office Healthcare Fraud Unit. A comprehensive investigation continued as the fraud committed by Brown was widespread throughout the county.

The Monterey County District Attorney's Healthcare Fraud Unit aggressively prosecutes prescription drug fraud in Monterey County. The unit also investigates and prosecutes other cases to include, but not limited to: use of another's identity to secure healthcare benefits; embezzlement; unlawful solicitations/referrals; fraudulent billing; inflated or falsified pharmacy billings; prescription fraud and abuse; out-patient surgery center fraud; Medi-Cal fraud and fraudulent disability claims.

This case was investigated by the Monterey Police Department and District Attorney Investigator Don Magnuson.