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Environment Department Issues Administrative Compliance Order and \$22,770 Fine to Taos Comprehensive Health Corporation

Company's uliMED Urgent Care Facility in Santa Fe Failed to Use Trained and Certified Personnel to Perform X-Ray Examinations

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department issued an Administrative Compliance Order and penalty of \$22,770 this week to Taos Comprehensive Health Corp. for allowing uncertified employees to conduct X-rays at the company's uliMED urgent care facility in Santa Fe.

The company violated New Mexico Radiation Protection Regulations by failing to comply with the requirement that auxiliary personnel operating the X-ray machine be trained and certified in accordance with those regulations.

“The New Mexico Environment Department inspects 1,800 X-ray machines across the state,” New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry said. “It’s imperative that those managing facilities that offer X-rays understand that only certified technicians conduct those tests. State Radiation Protection Regulations are intended to protect patients, medical staff and the public from exposure to radiation that could occur if these devices are operated by unqualified employees.”

The urgent medical care facility, uliMED, is located at 707 Paseo de Peralta in downtown Santa Fe.

NMED inspectors responded to a complaint in September regarding employees at the facility giving poor quality X-rays. An NMED inspector found that a physician’s assistant was performing most of the X-rays at the facility. Physician’s assistant training does not include training in the operation of X-ray equipment. Medical doctors are trained in operating X-ray equipment. Radiologic technologists, who are required to undergo rigorous training and testing as part of their certification program, can also perform X-rays. Company representatives claimed they were unaware of state regulations clarifying those who can conduct X-rays.

The order requires that the company immediately comply with state regulations and ensure that only those authorized to use radiation on humans operate X-ray equipment.

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