

California tuberculosis patient found, arrested (Update)

July 24 2014, by Scott Smith

(AP)—A man who was charged after refusing treatment for his tuberculosis was found and arrested, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

Eduardo Rosas Cruz, 25, was arrested late Monday, District Attorney Stephen Taylor said.

Authorities last week obtained an arrest warrant for Rosas Cruz, saying he was diagnosed with tuberculosis in March after going to an emergency room with a severe cough.

Medical staff at the hospital told him to stay in a motel room, where a health worker would deliver his medication and watch him take it. But officials say he left.

Rosas Cruz is a transient and comes from an area of Mexico known for a drug-resistant strain of TB, authorities said.

He was arrested during a traffic stop, said Ray Pruitt, a sheriff's office spokesman.

TB can spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The disease can be deadly.

Taylor said the goal of prosecuting a tuberculosis patient through the criminal courts is not to punish him, but to protect the public. He said Rosas Cruz refused to cooperate with officials.

In court papers filed in support of the warrant, public health officials said Rosas Cruz resisted treatment from the start. He also used crack cocaine and methamphetamine, officials said, adding that he could develop the drug-resistant strain if he hasn't already.

By law, health officials can't force a patient to be treated for tuberculosis, but officials can use the courts to isolate him from the public. That is when officials offer treatment.

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