



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2026

CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

UNLICENSED SURGEON SENTENCED TO 5 TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR KILLING 31-YEAR-OLD WOMAN DURING OPERATION IN MAKESHIFT HOME CLINIC

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Felipe Hoyos Foronda has been sentenced to five to 15 years in prison for the death of 31-year-old Maria Penaloza. Penaloza suffered cardiac arrest inside the defendant's Astoria apartment, which was set up as a makeshift surgical clinic. Hoyos Foronda, who was not a licensed physician in the United States, attempted to flee the country after the botched surgical procedure.

District Attorney Katz said: "Felipe Hoyos Foronda – who had no business practicing as a doctor or surgeon – ended the life of a young mother when he gave her a lethal dose of anesthesia and then attempted to flee the country. Today's sentence cannot undo this tragedy, but we hope it brings a measure of solace to Maria Penaloza's loved ones as they continue to grieve her senseless loss."

Hoyos Foronda, 40, of Astoria, pleaded guilty last month to manslaughter in the second degree before Supreme Court Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant who sentenced him today to five to 15 years in prison.

DA Katz said that according to the charges and investigation, on March 28, 2025, Maria Penaloza arrived at Hoyos Foronda's Astoria apartment at approximately 1 p.m. for the removal of buttock implants. She was accompanied by a friend who waited in the apartment's living room while Penaloza went into an adjacent room for the procedure.

Hoyos Foronda gave the victim lidocaine, which is a local anesthetic, and saline through a syringe. Penaloza became lightheaded and went into cardiac arrest.

When an ambulance crew arrived, Penaloza was unconscious on a medical chair. She was taken to a local hospital where she showed no sign of brain activity. She was removed from life support on April 11, 2025.

Hoyos Foronda, who did not have a license to practice medicine in the United States, was apprehended on March 28, 2025, at John F. Kennedy International Airport by a Port Authority Police officer as he attempted to board a flight to Florida with an ultimate destination of Colombia.

A court-authorized search warrant of the defendant's home found medical equipment including a metal IV stand, multiple injectables on the shelves, syringes, a bin to discard needles and various other medical supplies.

An autopsy found that Penaloza died of lidocaine toxicity following the injection of lidocaine for anesthesia during a cosmetic procedure.

Assistant District Attorney Gregory Lasak, of the District Attorney's Homicide Bureau prosecuted the case with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Jennie Evangelista under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys John Kosinski, Bureau Chief, and Karen Ross and Jonathan Selkove, Deputy Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Shawn Clark.

#

Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

