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'Fake doctor' pleads guilty to charge

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A man who held himself out as a doctor who could cure cancer has pleaded guilty to practicing medicine without a license and prescribing drugs not licensed for cancer treatment.

Bernardo Carlos Majalca, 60, entered the pleas yesterday in Santa Cruz Superior Court. The District Attorney's Office accepted the pleas with the condition that Majalca not be sent to prison.

The charges against Majalca started when he treated a man who died of cancer in Watsonville in 1991, but investigators said there is evidence Majalca's mail-order drug business had customers all over the country.

Majalca faces similar charges in San Benito County and was expected to enter pleas there yesterday, said Jon Hopkins, chief deputy district attorney for Santa Cruz County. Information on the San Benito County pleas was not immediately available.

Although Majalca told people he was a doctor and was 100 percent effective in curing bone cancer, he never had a license to practice medicine, Hopkins said.

Majalca had stationery for the "Preventative Medical Group," but his "office" was a mail drop, Hopkins said. Majalca had mailing addresses in San Ysidro, near the Mexican border, and Watsonville.

An incident in late 1991 led to the investigation of Majalca by state medical authorities.

On Nov. 23 of that year, Majalca brought Dean Norris, 47, who was suffering from tongue cancer, to Watsonville Community Hospital for treatment.

Norris had rejected traditional forms of cancer treatment and had been consulting Majalca for six weeks, investigators said. Norris died on Dec. 1 at the hospital.

Dr. Albert Crevello, a Watsonville doctor who met Majalca at the hospital, became suspicious of Majalca's statements that he was a doctor and contacted authorities.

The San Benito County case is

based on the death of Betty Crenshaw, who was seen by Majalca for several months before her death from cancer on June 17, 1992. Majalca gave Crenshaw an injection on the day she died, investigators said, but it was never determined what he injected her with.

Majalca will be sentenced Jan. 10.