

Patient Safety Alert:
Backroom Procedures not Worth the Risk:

Cosmetic Injectable Procedures Performed by Amateur Practitioners May Cause Pain, Disfigurement or Death

New York , NY (May 12, 2006) – The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) has announced today that many consumers are still unaware of the risks associated with aesthetic procedures performed by unlicensed practitioners. Recent reports from Chicago , California , Georgia and other locations document unsuspecting patients suffering from pain and disfigurement and in one case, death, when a woman was injected with cooking oil in a Salinas , California beauty salon.

Injectable fillers to enhance the bust, hips, buttocks or face are frequently administered in non-clinical settings by amateur or unlicensed practitioners. Unsuspecting patients have been injected with materials such as silicone, baby oil, and other substances that have no safety or efficacy record. Communities where patients have limited resources or do not speak English as a first language may be especially susceptible to false advertising and promotion of potentially dangerous procedures.

“We desperately need more consumer education on this topic. A good rule of thumb is, ‘Don't inject anything into your body without the advice of a doctor.’ Patients may be lured in by inexpensive prices and unrealistic claims. Patients think they are getting a bargain, but they are actually putting their health and lives at risk and they may not even know it,” said James M. Stuzin, MD, President of the Aesthetic Society. “Only licensed practitioners should perform cosmetic procedures. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery provides resources that can be accessed by phone and online to help patients find qualified physicians for cosmetic enhancement procedures.”

Patients can make safe and appropriate choices when seeking cosmetic procedures by selecting qualified physicians who perform or oversee the procedures in appropriate settings. The Aesthetic Society offers the following advice:

- Patients can check to see if the practitioner is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery by checking with the Board at: <http://www.abplsurg.org> or by calling 1-866-ASK-ABMS. Referrals to qualified surgeons can be found online at www.surgery.org, the website for the Aesthetic Society or by calling their referral line at 888.ASAPS.11 (272.7711).
- Cosmetic procedures are safely performed in accredited facilities.
- In most cases, cosmetic procedures offered in non-medical settings, such as homes, hotels and beauty salons are not performed by qualified individuals and may involve the use of illegal or unknown substances.

- Patients should never choose a doctor solely on the basis of lower cost.

“We hear very sad and frustrating stories of patients being taken advantage of by phony doctors and illegal procedures. Patients are being scammed and exposed to great harm. We need to let them know that they should do their homework—find out more information about the procedure, location and practitioner before going for any kind of cosmetic enhancements,” said Dr. Stuzin.

About The Aesthetic Society

The 2300-member American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) is the only plastic surgery organization devoted entirely to the advancement of cosmetic surgery. ASAPS is recognized throughout the world as the authoritative source for cosmetic surgery education. U.S. members are certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Canadian members are certified in plastic surgery by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Toll-free referral line: 888.ASAPS.11 (272.7711). Web site: www.surgery.org