

### Operation Raw Deal

The Drug Enforcement Administration, Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Postal Service and other federal agencies seized massive amounts of anabolic steroids, human growth hormone and insulin growth factor in a series of coordinated raids across the United States and nine other countries in late September. At least 124 individuals were arrested in the United States and face indictments ranging from conspiracy to import anabolic steroids to conspiracy to launder money. Operation Raw Deal is a four-pronged strategy focusing on: raw material manufacturers/suppliers in China and other countries; underground anabolic laboratories in the United States, Canada and Mexico; numerous U.S.-based websites distributing raw materials, or conversion kits necessary to convert raw steroid powders into finished product; and Internet bodybuilding discussion boards that are the catalysts for individuals to learn how to illicitly use, locate and discreetly purchase performance enhancing drugs. Investigators are expected to work closely with major professional sports organizations to identify athletes who may have purchased from some of these websites. The full press release can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr092407.html>.

### Albany County District Attorney Investigation Update

News and indictments from the investigation headed by the Albany County District Attorney continue to come to light in recent months. The following highlights some of the new developments.

- Daniel McGlone of North Brunswick, N.J., agreed to plead guilty to 50 counts, including conspiracy, health care fraud and money launder-

ing. McGlone owns the American Pharmaceutical Group. (Associated Press, July 13, 2007)

- Ana Maria Santi, a former doctor, pleaded guilty to writing steroid prescriptions for people she never met or examined. (Associated Press, July 14, 2007)
- Dr. Claire Godfrey, a well known Florida obstetrician, pleaded guilty to a felony drug count in connection with a nationwide steroids distribution network. (*The Times Union*, July 25, 2007)
- Dr. Robert G. Carlson, a Florida surgeon, pleaded guilty to a minor felony count of insurance fraud in exchange for agreeing to cooperate with Albany County prosecutors. (*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Aug. 29, 2007)
- *Sports Illustrated* named 14 World Wrestling Entertainment wrestlers who allegedly received steroids and/or human growth hormone through this network, including Christ Benoit, Eddie Guerrero, Chavo Guerrero, Shane Helms, Randy Orton, John Hennigan, Ken Anderson, Shoichi Funaki, Brian Adams, Charles Haas, Edward Fatu, Darren Matthews, Adam Copeland and Sylvain Grenier. (SI.com, Posted Aug. 30, 2007)
- Professional athletes including Troy Glaus and Rick Ankiel with Major League Baseball, and Rodney Harrison with the National Football League, allegedly received steroids and/or human growth hormone from Signature Compounding Pharmacy in Orlando, Fla. Signature Compounding Pharmacy faces allegations of being at the center of an illicit steroids and Internet drug-distribution network from the Albany County District Attorney's office. (*Orlando Sentinel*, Sept. 8, 2007)
- An investigation by Yahoo! Sports indicated that Chinese manufacturers are a primary source of illegally imported human growth hormone in-

volved in the ongoing scandal involving professional athletes and performance-enhancing drugs. Authorities say Chinese-made growth hormone is subjected to less stringent manufacturing guidelines than those enforced by the Food and Drug Administration, thereby increasing potential health risks. (Yahoo! Sports, Posted Sept. 20, 2007)

## News of Interest

- The FDA announced July 2, 2007, that consumers are continuing to purchase potentially risky drugs over the Internet. The FDA urges consumers to have a prescription from their doctor or other health professional before using prescription drugs. There is also risk associated with drugs that are not properly labeled for safe and effective use or drugs that may not have been manufactured under proper conditions. The full press release can be found at <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01663.html>.
- A federal grand jury in San Diego indicted 18 individuals on racketeering and related charges for allegedly operating an Internet business that generated more than \$126 million in gross revenues from the illegal sale of prescription pharmaceuticals to customers across the United States. The indictment, returned on July 27, was the result of a two-year multi-agency investigation headed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement targeting an online pharmaceutical distribution network known as Affpower. The full press release can be found at <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/newsreleases/articles/070802sandiego.htm>.
- Alvin Woody, a Mooresville, North Carolina pharmacist, and four defendants from Vermont, Wisconsin, New York, and California have been indicted on drug distribution and money laundering charges in connection with an alleged unlawful prescription drug operation, Gretchen C.F. Shappert, U.S. Attorney for the Western

District of North Carolina, announced on July 20, 2007. According to the indictment, from around August 2002 to about May 2006, the five defendants conspired with each other and others to distribute powerful and addictive prescription painkillers and anxiety medications, all of which are Schedule III or Schedule IV controlled substances, to customers located throughout the United States based on purported prescriptions. The indictment charges 81 additional counts of drug distribution to specific customers and 19 money laundering offenses and includes a notice of forfeiture and finding of probable cause that the defendants forfeit all property involved in the offenses charged in the indictment, and all property traceable to such offenses. The full press release can be found at <http://charlotte.fbi.gov/dojpressrel/2007/ce072007.htm>.

## Disciplinary Actions

The following is a partial list of recent disciplinary actions taken against physicians who prescribed medicine via the Internet.

- Florida Board of Medicine—Mario Alberto Diaz, M.D., was reprimanded, suspended and fined on Sept. 26, 2007. Suspension will last for one year past his release from prison for controlled substances violations, and he will be placed on probation and have his practice monitored upon resumption of practice.

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