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NEWS RELEASE
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**DANGERS OF ILLICIT AND MISBRANDED PHARMACEUTICALS
DISCUSSED AT DA'S OFFICE NEWS CONFERENCE**

RIVERSIDE – Unsuspecting customers buying pharmaceuticals online, or from stores and homes that are not licensed pharmacies could be getting drugs that either don't work as expected or may contain ingredients that have dangerous – even deadly -- side effects.

Today, June 12, 2018, DA Mike Hestrin held a news conference to alert the public to the dangers of purchasing illicit or misbranded pharmaceuticals. He was joined by former Congresswoman Mary Bono and Ali Schroer, a Colorado woman who purchased prescription medication online which instead made her more ill.

Illicit or misbranded pharmaceuticals carry potential dangers which can include: missing key ingredients, having the wrong active ingredients, being the wrong strength and dosage, may include contaminants, improper labeling, unsafe methods used to make them, causing an allergic reaction, and the improper and unsafe storage of the drug such as in hot or non-sterile conditions. These drugs also may not contain any of the expected active ingredients or could even contain too much.

Investigators with the DA's Bureau of Investigation recently raided five locations in Riverside County -- two businesses in Corona, one business in Moreno Valley, and a business and a residence in the city of Riverside. Approximately 9,700 dosages of various drugs were seized at the five locations. The DA's Office has filed criminal cases against seven people involved in those illicit operations.

Charges stemming from raids at the two Corona stores and a store in Riverside include dispensing a dangerous drug and selling a misbranded drug – both misdemeanors. One of the Corona stores was selling pharmaceuticals near where it was selling meats. At the Moreno Valley location, the business owner has been charged with dispensing a dangerous drug and selling a misbranded drug as well as a felony for practicing medicine without a license for reportedly injecting customers. At the Riverside residence, DA's investigators arrested a woman who has been charged with dispensing a dangerous drug and selling a misbranded drug as well as child endangerment as there were two young children in the home.

At this time, the DA's Office doesn't know if anyone has been harmed from using any of the illicit pharmaceuticals that were sold at any of these locations.

The investigation was in partnership with Investigative Consultants and the California Department of Health, Food and Drug Branch.

These illicit pharmaceuticals are often illegally imported from Mexico with many sellers targeting consumers in the Spanish-speaking community. Those drugs are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for sale or use in the United States. Federal regulations require that all pertinent information required to appear on a medication's label shall appear in the English language.

The DA's Office will be providing information in the near future about several ways we hope to educate the public and business owners about illicit and misbranded pharmaceuticals. One of those ways will be two educational

trainings for business owners and swap meet vendors – one at the DA’s Office in Riverside and a second in the Coachella Valley. They are being planned for late July.

Anyone who would like to provide information about the possible sales of illicit pharmaceuticals can call a tip line the DA’s Office has now set up at: (951) 955-4080.

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