



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE
MIKE HESTRIN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

WEBSITE: WWW.RIVCODA.ORG

TWITTER: @RIVCODA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUG 17, 2015

CONTACT: JOHN HALL
DISTRICT ATTORNEY INFORMATION SPECIALIST
951.955.8662

**WALGREENS AGREES TO SETTLE CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWSUIT
INVOLVING PROPER PHARMACIST CONSULTATIONS**

RIVERSIDE – Today, Aug. 17, 2015, Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin announced that the Walgreens Co. pharmacy chain has agreed to a \$502,200 settlement of a consumer protection lawsuit.

The civil lawsuit was brought against Walgreens by the Riverside, Alameda, and San Diego County District Attorney's Offices based upon an investigation initiated by the California State Board of Pharmacy. A civil complaint, filed in San Diego County Superior Court, alleges that Walgreens pharmacists failed to fully comply with Board of Pharmacy requirements that prescription drug customers receiving new prescriptions or new dosages of existing prescriptions receive a personal consultation from a pharmacist. Those consultations are important to help safeguard that prescriptions are filled as directed by the patient's doctor as well as to insure that the patient knows the proper and safe use of the prescribed medication or medications.

In 2011, the state Board of Pharmacy contacted the three DA's Offices involved in this case explaining the health risks that could arise when pharmacists fail to properly provide needed personal consultation to prescription drug customers. Working with the Board of Pharmacy, the three DA's Offices conducted an undercover investigation into the consultation practices of several of the major pharmacy chains in California.

Under the terms of judgement in this matter, which Walgreens entered without admission of liability, Walgreens must comply properly with the state's standards for patient consultations and must implement an internal compliance programs.

Walgreens agreed to pay civil penalties of \$423,000 – each county DA's Office will receive one-third, or \$141,000 – and also will pay \$79,200 in investigative costs. Walgreens and its legal counsel worked cooperatively with the prosecutors to resolve this matter and to implement the new compliance procedures.

The stipulated final judgement was signed by San Diego County Superior Court Judge Lisa Schall.

The case in Riverside County was handled by Deputy District Attorney Elise Farrell of the DA's Consumer Protection Team.

###