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Press Room

News Releases
 E-mail updates 
 Speeches & Testimony
 Multi-Media Library

About Us

Mission
 Leadership
 History
 Organizational Chart
 Programs & Operations
 Wall of Honor
 DEA Museum
 Office Locations

Careers at DEA

DEA Drug Information

Drug Information Resources

Law Enforcement

Most Wanted
 Major Operations
 Threat Assessment
 Training Programs
 Stats & Facts
 Additional Resources

Drug Prevention

For Young Adults
 For Parents
 Additional Drug Resources

Diversions Control & Prescription Drugs

Registration
 Cases Against Doctors

Drug Policy

Controlled Substances Act
 Federal Trafficking Penalties
 Drug Scheduling

Legislative Resources

Publications

Acquisitions & Contracts

More Than Two Dozen Boeing Employees Arrested in Drug Sting

SEP 29 – PHILADELPHIA – DEA and FBI agents today arrested employees and former employees of Boeing’s Ridley Park plant and one non-employee in a coordinated, long-term, undercover effort aimed at prescription drug abuse at the manufacturing plant, DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge Vito Guarino announced. Joining Acting SAC Guarino was United States Attorney Zane David Memeger and FBI Special Agent in Charge George Venizelos.

Indictments against 23 individuals were unsealed today charging each with the illegal distribution of a prescription drug. The drugs being distributed by these defendants include but are not limited to fentanyl (“Actiq”), oxycodone (“Oxycontin”), alprazolam (“Xanax”), and buprenorphine (“Suboxone”). In addition to the indictments, 14 other defendants are charged by information with attempted possession of the various drugs being sold by their co-workers. This is a misdemeanor charge which is the reason they are not charged by indictment. The charges allege that each defendant either sold a controlled substance to an FBI cooperator or bought what was believed to be a controlled substance from the cooperator but which was, in fact, a placebo.

“The defendants in this case are accused of diverting controlled substances and selling them to alleged abusers without any medical supervision,” said Guarino. “These sales placed the individual abusers, as well as society at large, at risk. Part of DEA’s mission is to investigate the unlawful diversion of pharmaceutical controlled substances and bring those involved to justice, whether it is a doctor, pharmacist, or street distributor.”

The drugs were being distributed on Boeing’s property. Boeing officials brought their suspicions of drug activity to federal law enforcement and have cooperated fully with the long-term investigation.

“This investigation and prosecution focused not only on the sellers, but also on the users because of the critical role that these employees play in manufacturing military aircraft,” said Memeger. “Prescription drug abuse has been on the rise in our community, and this is just one example of how pervasive the problem is.”

“Drug abuse and the illegal sale and purchase of controlled substances are serious criminal problems in the U.S. today, and those who engage in the sale and distribution of pharmaceutical drugs will be targeted,” said Venizelos. “The abuse of prescription narcotic drugs can be as dangerous and devastating as the use of illegal drugs.”

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