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AG Bondi unveils new strategies to fight Florida's growing pill mill problems



Attorney General Pam Bondi today unveiled her comprehensive strategy to address pill mills in Florida, including a series of legislative recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. Because of pill mills, Florida leads the nation in diverted prescription drugs, and Attorney General Bondi has made it her top priority to aggressively tackle this public safety crisis. Attorney General Bondi was joined today by law enforcement officials throughout the state.

Key legislative recommendations include:

- Mandatory six-month suspension and \$10,000 fine for doctors who violate standards of care when prescribing controlled substances;
- Criminal penalty (third-degree felony) for those who use fraud or misrepresentation to register as a pain clinic;
- Criminal penalty for doctors who fail to perform a physical examination before dispensing 72-hours worth of controlled substances; second-degree misdemeanor for the first offense; first-degree misdemeanor for the second offense; and third-degree felony for the third offense; and
- Requirement that anyone who maintains inventory of controlled substances must report the discovery of any theft of controlled substances to local law enforcement or FDLE within 48 hours; failure to do so will result in administrative penalties and fines.

In addition to her legislative proposals, Attorney General Bondi outlined the need for aggressive administrative enforcement on pain clinics and doctors; increased criminal prosecution through partnerships between the Office of Statewide Prosecution and State Attorneys in high drug-trafficking areas; and long-term prevention strategies such as drug takebacks and drug courts.

“Our state needs a unified effort at every level to eradicate Florida’s pill mills,” said Attorney General Bondi. “We are working with state and local law enforcement, as well



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as our federal partners, to curtail the dangerous dispensing and abuse of prescription drugs.”

Today’s participants included:

- Attorney General Bondi
- Dave Aronberg, Special Counsel on Pill Mills
- Ken Tucker, Assistant Commissioner of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Nick Cox, Statewide Prosecutor
- Pam Marsh, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida
- Lorri Hall, Jacksonville Sheriff’s Officer and Detective for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- Dr. Fred Bearison, Board of Medicine
- Karen Perry, N.O.P.E. co-founder and anti-pill mill advocate

Florida has become the destination for distributors and abusers through the proliferation of pill mills. While the Legislature has already enacted several reforms to address this growing problem, Attorney General Bondi has identified additional provisions that will give law enforcement enhanced tools to investigate and prosecute pill mills and crack down on doctors that engage in drug trafficking.

“I commend the Attorney General for making this her top priority,” said Dave Aronberg. “No longer will Florida serve as the pill mill for the rest of the country.”

Also attending in support of Attorney General Bondi’s pill mill strategies were: Amy Mercer, Executive Director, Florida Police Chiefs Association; Steve Casey, Executive Director, Florida Sheriffs Association; and Cheryl Stewart, Deputy Police Chief, Tallahassee Police Department.