

Monthly Columns

by Attorney General Jack Conway



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Kentucky law enforcement struck a major blow against the prescription pill pipeline that exists between Kentucky and other states, particularly Florida.

On October 28-29, more than 300 arrests were made in 34 Kentucky counties on charges related to the illegal diversion of prescription pills. This marked the largest drug sweep in Kentucky's history, and I am proud that my Drug Investigations Branch and statewide Prescription Drug Diversion Task Force were part of this unprecedented operation.

I am grateful to our partners — Kentucky State Police; the FBI; Operation Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education (UNITE); Appalachian High Intensity Drug Traffic Area (HIDTA); U.S. Attorney's Office and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. I look forward to our continued involvement in this ongoing investigation into the illegal diversion of prescription pills in the Commonwealth.

My Drug Investigations Branch began working with Operation UNITE in July 2008 as part of this historic operation. I'm pleased to say that our investigation resulted in the arrest of 27 individuals in Powell and Menifee counties on nearly 50 counts of trafficking in a controlled substance, 1st and 2nd degree.

I'd like to thank all of my investigators, as well as Operation UNITE's Dan Smoot and Karen Engle, for the wonderful work they do. I am particularly grateful to 5th District Congressman Hal Rogers, who formed Operation UNITE in 2005 to combat prescription drug abuse in Eastern Kentucky. One of the first meetings I had as Attorney General was with Congressman Rogers to discuss forging a new drug diversion partnership between my office and Operation UNITE.

This unprecedented drug sweep is particularly gratifying, given the fact that Kentucky led the nation last year in prescription pill use for non-medical purposes. Even more startling is

that one in five teenagers has used prescription pills for recreational purposes during the past 30 days. Kentucky is losing too many of our children to prescription pill overdoses and abuse.

I believe the commitment from my office and law enforcement at the local, state and federal level, sends a clear message to those who divert illegal prescription pills into Kentucky. We will investigate and shut down these deadly pill pipelines that have taken a toll on families in every corner of the Commonwealth.

As the state's chief law officer, public safety is my top priority. That's why I will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review the October 1 ruling by the Kentucky Supreme Court on the residency restrictions for registered sex offenders. The state Supreme Court ruling found it was unconstitutional to retroactively apply residency restrictions on sex offenders who committed their crimes before July 12, 2006, when the law took effect.

I believe the court's decision raises serious public safety concerns, as it could result in hundreds of sex offenders living next to schools and daycares. In the interest of protecting Kentucky families, my Office will file a motion requesting that U.S. Supreme Court suspend implementation of the ruling until the court determines whether it will hear the case.

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