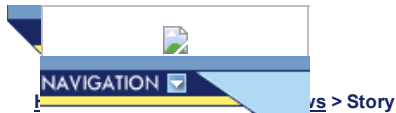




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Thursday, April 7, 2005
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Attorney General sues Tampa couple over fake cystic fibrosis drug

By VICKIE CHACHERE
Associated Press Writer

TAMPA, Fla. - A couple who own a pharmacy were under arrest and facing a lawsuit from the Florida Attorney General's Office Thursday on charges they concocted homemade medication and passed it off as drugs to treat cystic fibrosis.

Patricia A. Hauser, 50, and her husband, Roderick J.Q.

Hauser, 37, were being held in the Pinellas County Jail on \$5,000 bond each. They face charges of with unlawfully compounding and dispensing counterfeit medicine and fraud.

The Hausers are not licensed pharmacists in Florida but owned a pharmacy in Oldsmar, west of the Tampa area, called Rapha Associates. Its Web site also advertises janitorial supplies, church supplies and food products.

One of the phony medicines, which are used through inhalers, was contaminated by bacteria, the attorney general's office said.

"It's horrific," Attorney General Charlie Crist said Thursday. "It's unconscionable that someone would make some fake drug that had bacteria in it for kids to inhale. I can't imagine the demented mind that would think that up."

Efforts to reach the Hauser's legal representative were not successful. The couple were arrested Thursday morning.

The lawsuit filed in Florida Circuit Court in Tampa seeks \$245,000 in damages and penalties. It alleges that couple made a mixture of chemicals found in name-brand drugs and sold them from their pharmacy as legitimate drugs called TOBI, Albuterol and Pulmicort.

Patients unknowingly took the counterfeit drugs, believing they were the authentic medications. One of the counterfeited drugs was the inhaled medication TOBI, which is used for treatment of children with cystic fibrosis.

The investigation began when the mother of a cystic fibrosis patient showed a bottle of medicine obtained from the pharmacy to a doctor who noticed it was not the kind used by the drug's manufacturer. The doctor called the Food and Drug Administration.

Medicaid Fraud Control Unit determined that the Hausers received \$81,875 after submitting false claims to Medicaid relating to the three counterfeit drugs.

The Hausers each face felonies punishable by up to 30 years in prison if convicted as charged.

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