



The United States Attorney's Office

District of Kansas

Belgian Citizen Sentenced For Selling Counterfeit, Misbranded Drugs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KANSAS CITY, KAN. – **Manuel Calvelo**, 37, a citizen of Belgium, has been sentenced to 48 months in federal prison on charges of operating an Internet pharmacy that sold misbranded and counterfeit drugs as well as controlled substances, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said today. The court also ordered a forfeiture money judgment of more than \$850,000 on the proceeds of the crime.

Calvelo, who was arrested in Costa Rica and extradited to Kansas, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States and one count of conspiracy to commit drug trafficking. In his plea, he admitted that from 2005 to 2008 he and another man operated Web sites offering for sale without a prescription misbranded and counterfeit drugs to customers in the United States in violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

Calvelo's Web sites offered for sale more than 40 prescription drugs including brand names Viagra, Depakote, Glucophage, Zoloft, Lipitor, Cialis, Xanax, Ativan and Klonopin. Controlled substances for sale from the Web site included Alprazolam (sold under the brand name Xanax), Lorazepam (Ativan) and Clonazepam (Klonopin). Under federal law, the crime of misbranding includes dispensing a prescription drug without a valid prescription from a licensed practitioner.

“This investigation and today's sentencing reflect the seriousness of importing counterfeit and misbranded pharmaceutical drugs into the United States,” said Patrick J. Holland, Special Agent in Charge of the FDA's Office of Criminal Investigations' Kansas City Field Office. “We will continue to investigate and pursue this type of criminal activity and to ensure the safety of the pharmaceutical drug supply.”

Calvelo's Web sites included cheapestviagraworldwide.com, allcheapdrugs.com, allcheappills.com, cheapdrugspharmacy.com, allmedspharmacy.net, allnaturalpharmacy.com, horizonpharmacy.net, and trustgeneric.com.

Calvelo's Web sites accepted orders from buyers in the United States and elsewhere. He operated a customer service call center in the Philippines and issued payments to employees through wire transfers via Western Union in the Philippines, Costa Rica and the United States. He also received payments from customers via credit card processors in the Netherlands.

From early in 2007 to early in 2008, Calvelo paid a company in Overland Park, Kan., for hosting his Web sites. In 2008, he transferred the hosting of some of the Web sites to a company in Columbus, Ohio.

In 2007, an undercover agent from the Food and Drug Administration's Office of Criminal Investigations made purchases from Calvelo's Web sites. The agent later contacted Calvelo through the Costa Rica Off-Shore Business Center posing as a pharmaceutical wholesaler in the United States seeking to establish an on-line pharmacy. In conversations with the agent via video conference calls on Skype, Calvelo admitted his role in the Internet pharmacy scheme and provided details of the operation.

Co-defendant **Jeffrey Westmoreland**, 35, a citizen of Canada, is a fugitive.

Grissom commended the Food and Drug Administration's Office of Criminal Investigation, John Claud of the Justice Department's Office of Consumer Protection Litigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Rask for their work on the case.

In all cases, defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The indictments filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.