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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

ENFORCEMENT OPERATION TARGETING SUSPECTED ILLEGAL CODEINE SYNDICATE

A total of six men, aged between 37 and 61, are being investigated for offences following a multi-agency enforcement operation conducted from 14 to 16 June 2023.

2 The joint operation, targeting a suspected illegal codeine syndicate, was carried out by Bedok Police Division and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA). The operation was the biggest involving illegal codeine syndicates since 2019. More than \$680,000 in cash, approximately 190 litres of codeine cough syrup in canisters worth about \$150,000 in street value, assortment of pills, 34 e-vaporisers and eight packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The codeine would have fed the addiction of about 1000 addicts if sold on the streets.

3 The syndicate allegedly supplied unregistered health products such as cough syrup and medicines. Their illegal activities were conducted at various locations across Singapore, including the vicinity of Lorong 34 Geylang, and at a licensed clinic in Bishan.

4 The six men are being investigated for offences under the Health Products Act 2007, Customs Act 1960 and Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act 1993. Of the six men, four were arrested as suspected members of an unlawful society under Section 14(3) of the Societies Act 1966, and are being investigated for further offences under the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act 1992.

5 Preliminary investigations revealed that the supply of codeine was allegedly obtained from the clinic in Bishan before being processed for illegal sale in Geylang at a residential unit at Choa Chu Kang Avenue 3. Those found guilty of importing, manufacturing and/or supplying of unregistered health products, may be liable to an imprisonment term for up to two years and/or fined up to \$50,000.

6 The Ministry of Health (MOH) is investigating the clinic in Bishan, and will take necessary enforcement actions if the investigations detect any breaches to the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act. The medical practitioner will also be referred to the Singapore Medical Council should any professional lapses be found.

7 The Commanding Officer of Geylang Neighbourhood Police Centre, Superintendent of Police Muhammad Firdaus Bin Abdul Raub commended the officers for their professionalism and excellent teamwork during the operation. He added, "The close partnership and trust between the Police and HSA has been crucial in maintaining law and order in Geylang. The Police will continue to work closely with other enforcement agencies to clamp down on illegal activities in Geylang."

8 Ms Annie Tan, Director of Enforcement Branch, HSA, added, "Collaborative efforts between the Police and HSA have enabled us to successfully uncover and disrupt the illegal supply of cough syrups and other medicines, thus preventing further harm to the public. HSA will continue to step up on enforcement efforts and work with the relevant agencies on raid operations in targeted areas to crack down on the illegal supply of such medicines."

9 Investigations against the six persons are ongoing.

10 The Police and HSA take a zero-tolerance approach towards illegal activities and will take firm action against those who blatantly disregard the law. Members of the public are advised to report those engaging in unlawful activities involving unregistered health products to the Enforcement Branch of HSA at Tel: 6866-3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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Officers seizing assortment of items from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Containers of cough syrup seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Empty bottles seized from unit at Choa Chu Kang



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Ang Mo Kio



Assortment of pills seized from unit at Ang Mo Kio



Containers of cough syrup seized from unit at Sin Ming



Implements seized from unit at Sin Ming



Assortment of pills and bottles of cough syrup seized in vicinity of Lorong 34 Geylang



Cash seized in operation



Cash seized in operation