

HEALTH ADVISORY



March 29, 2021
2:00 p.m. ChST

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road, Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950



CHCC-PR-21-147

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illegal pharmaceuticals found on Saipan

The Department of Commerce's Division of Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Control (ABTC) and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation's (CHCC) Environmental Health Disease Prevention (EHDP) identified three (3) business establishments dispensing illegal prescription pharmaceuticals: two (2) retailers and one (1) wholesaler.

On March 18, ABTC discovered illegal prescription pharmaceuticals during a routine inspection of a retail establishment. ABTC's report was forwarded to EHDP the same day. EHDP inspectors and CHCC pharmacy examiners then identified and authenticated nine (9) boxes of prescription antibiotics.

Subsequent inspections were conducted on March 19, which identified more establishments involved in dispensing illegal pharmaceuticals, and yielded 875 capsules of amoxicillin and 184 capsules of ibuprofen. Both antibiotics require a physician and a pharmacist to order and dispense accordingly.

The investigation is ongoing.

Pursuant to [Public Law 12-40, article 3, subsection 307](#), no drugs are to be sold unless its batch is safely indicated. Antibiotics are prescribed medication in the CNMI.

Misuse of antibiotic medication may lead to antibiotic resistance in any individual. [According to the World Health Organization](#), antibiotic resistance is putting the achievements of modern medicine at risk. Organ transplantations, chemotherapy and surgeries such as cesarean sections become much more dangerous without effective antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections.

Drug recall information is publicly available on the FDA website: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-recalls>.

For more information, contact EHDP at (670) 664-4870/72/73, or email the director of EHDP, John Tagabuel, at john.tagabuel@dph.gov.mp.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc; visit the website at www.chcc.gov.mp; or call (670) 234-8950.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html>.