



## **FDA WARNS VS FAKE PRODUCTS**

CEBU CITY - The head of the government agency tasked with ensuring the safety, quality and efficacy of food, medicines, cosmetics and medical devices has asked the public anew to be more conscious about buying and taking counterfeit products citing its health risks.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Director Nela Charade Puno said that counterfeit products may be contaminated or contain the wrong or no active ingredient.

"They could also have the right active ingredient but at the wrong dose. Counterfeit food, drugs and cosmetics are illegal and may be harmful to your health," Puno explained.

Puno said that the FDA received reports that unscrupulous traders are flooding the local market with unregistered and untested food, drugs and other pharmaceutical products.

She advised the public not to buy these products from establishments or on-line stores operating without the necessary government permits.

"Consumers must be vigilant in buying these food and other health products. Purchase only from government licensed pharmacies and make sure that they have the Certificate of Product Registration (CPR) from the FDA," Puno said.

Puno added that in order to combat counterfeit food, drug and cosmetic products, the FDA is working with other state agencies like the Philippine National Police, local government units and the private sector to help protect the nation's food and drug supply from the threat of counterfeits.

Last year the FDA signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Philippine National Police (PNP) which organized the FDA-PNP Task Force D-PUNCH or Destroying Products Unfit for Human Consumption.

She urged the public to report to the FDA Task Force headed by retired General Allen Bantolo, suspected counterfeit products.

The FDA REU recently seized unregistered health products and compounding equipment approximately worth more than P10 million and shut down a Mandaue-Cebu based pharmacy and mini-laboratory as it stepped up its campaign against counterfeit products in the Visayas region.

Seized and confiscated were several boxes of Glutathione, vitamin c in powder form, Bio-C, Immuno Factor and minerals tablets and other additives/components for manufacturing injectable health products.

Assorted packaging materials, labeling materials, equipment used in manufacturing health products, computers, and receipts of sales transactions were also seized during the raid.

Supervising the Cebu operation were Gen. Bantolo and Atty. Guillermo G Danipog, Jr., with PNP-PRO7 led by PSupt. Reynaldo A Magdaluyo.

Puno also acknowledged the support of P/CSUPT Jose Mario Espino, PNP Regional Director of Region VII, for the success of the operation.

An alleged accountant of American Compounding Pharmacy, Inc. was arrested after the latter failed to present a valid license to operate, and for selling unregistered health products.

Under Republic Act 9711 or the Food and Drug Administration Act of 2009, any person caught selling fake medicines will face a 1 to 10 years of imprisonment or a fine of P50,000 to P100,000.