

## **Suspicious Activity Reports Document International Payments Underlying Illicit Human Growth Hormone Trafficking**

A multi-agency task force investigating the illicit importation of human growth hormone (HGH) used SARs and other investigative tools to trace international payments made by illegal distributors throughout the United States.

Operating under various enterprise names, the defendant obtained HGH from various sources, including foreign pharmaceutical companies, as alleged in the indictment. The defendant's customers paid him through a variety of means that were often designed to conceal the identity of both the customer and the shipper, including money transmittals, postal money orders, bank transfers, and electronic Internet payments.

The defendant pleaded guilty to smuggling goods into the United States, two counts of distributing HGH, and three counts of money laundering. A Federal judge sentenced the defendant to several months in community confinement and home confinement for HGH trafficking, and the defendant forfeited over \$120,000 that represented the proceeds of his sales. The foreign pharmaceutical company and its CEO were also charged in a Federal indictment with operating an international HGH smuggling operation. Investigators used an asset forfeiture provision in the USA PATRIOT Act to seize approximately \$2.5 million associated with the foreign corporation that provided the drugs.

The investigation is part of an operation that has focused on international smuggling of HGH and anabolic steroids, illegal distribution of the pharmaceuticals, and in-home laboratories in which steroids are converted from powder into usable forms.

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