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## PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN

For Immediate Release  
March 20, 2007

BC Coroners Service

### **DRUGS BOUGHT ONLINE CAN BE DEADLY**

VICTORIA – Pills purchased on the Internet are being linked to the recent death of a 57-year-old woman in the Campbell River area, according to the BC Coroners Service.

“We cannot impress upon the public strongly enough the dangers of buying medications online from a company you don’t know,” said Rose Stanton, Vancouver Island Regional Coroner. “There is just no way of knowing what you are getting.”

Stanton said the Coroners Service and RCMP are still investigating the precise cause of the woman’s death, but preliminary results suggest poisoning, prompting the public warning.

All the pills found in the possession of the deceased were purchased through a health-related website belonging to a group of companies which, according to the coroner’s investigation, change websites and Internet addresses as often as every three or four days.

Analysis by the Provincial Toxicology Centre found some of the pills contained an anti-anxiety medication that is sold in Canada only with a doctor’s prescription. A second drug was identified as a strong sleeping pill and sedative which has been linked to overdose deaths in other countries and is not legally sold in Canada.

All the pills contain filler material. Testing of the filler materials reveals the presence of numerous heavy metals which can pose a serious health risk. Testing is ongoing. Health Canada has been consulted.

If you have purchased a drug over the Internet that you are uncertain about, do not ingest, handle or discard it. Bring it in its original packaging to a pharmacy for proper disposal. A pharmacist or your doctor can answer questions or you can call the BC NurseLine at 1-866-215-4700 toll-free, 24-hours. Do not dispose of the drugs by flushing them down a toilet.

The B.C. Coroners Service is responsible for the investigation of all unnatural, sudden and unexpected, unexplained or unattended deaths. It makes recommendations to improve public safety and prevent death in similar circumstances.

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