



Lundbeck overhauls pentobarbital distribution program to restrict misuse

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New specialty pharmacy drop ship program will deny distribution of pentobarbital to prisons in U.S. states currently carrying out the death penalty by lethal injection.

Lundbeck today announced that the company has moved to alter the distribution of its medicine Nembutal[®] (pentobarbital sodium injection, USP) in order to restrict its application as part of lethal injection in the U.S. Going forward, Nembutal will be supplied exclusively through a specialty pharmacy drop ship program that will deny distribution of the product to prisons in U.S. states currently active in carrying out the death penalty by lethal injection. The company notified its distributors of the plan in late June.

The new distribution program ensures that hospitals and treatment centers will continue to have access to Nembutal for therapeutic purposes. Under the program, Lundbeck will review all Nembutal orders before providing clearance for shipping the product and deny orders from prisons located in states currently active in carrying out death penalty sentences.

Prior to receiving Nembutal, the purchaser must sign a form stating that the purchase of Nembutal is for its own use and that it will not redistribute any purchased product without express written authorization from Lundbeck. By signing the form, the purchaser agrees that the product will not be made available for use in capital punishment.

"Lundbeck adamantly opposes the distressing misuse of our product in capital punishment. Since learning about the misuse we have vetted a broad range of remedies - many suggested during ongoing dialogue with external experts, government officials, and human rights advocates. After much consideration, we have determined that a restricted distribution system is the most meaningful means through which we can restrict the misuse of Nembutal," says Ulf Wiinberg, Chief Executive Officer of H. Lundbeck A/S and continues: "While the company has never sold the product directly to prisons and therefore can't make guarantees, we are confident that our new distribution program will play a substantial role in restricting prisons' access to Nembutal for misuse as part of lethal injection."

Lundbeck has initiated a thorough investigation of the distribution of Nembutal to assess ways of restricting prisons' access to the medicine. Based on the initial findings, the company believes its new distribution program is the best way to achieve this. The investigation will be completed, and any possible further options that may be discovered will be evaluated.

Prior to the implementation of the drop ship program, Nembutal was sold through a more standard process utilizing several distributors to fulfill orders based on whether customers held the appropriate federal and state licenses for ordering controlled substances.

Meets important medical need

Nembutal represents less than one percent of Lundbeck's global sales but the company chose not to withdraw the product from the market because the product continues to meet an important medical need in the U.S. Nembutal is used to treat serious conditions such as a severe and life threatening emergency epilepsy.

In a recent survey of more than 200 U.S. physicians and pharmacists conducted by independent third-party research companies, 90 percent of the respondents stated that options for treating patients requiring emergency control of certain acute convulsive episodes would be compromised if Nembutal were no longer available for use. Furthermore, 95 percent of respondents reported that it is very important for their institution to have access to Nembutal for potential use in the medical care of patients. All survey respondents were from academic institutions, large community hospitals or epilepsy centers in the U.S.

Contacts