



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
CENTER FOR DRUG EVALUATION AND RESEARCH**

7520 Standish Place-Room 254
Rockville, Maryland 20855
USA

March 26, 2001

Ref. No. 01-HFD-310I-99

The Somatropin Drugstore
36 Adderly Street
Cape Town 8001
South Africa

Dear Sirs:

This is to advise you that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has reviewed your web site at the Internet address: http://www.geocities.com/growth_hormone_therapy and has determined that the drug Ansomone® (somatropin) being offered for sale is a prescription drug in the United States (U.S.). FDA is unable to determine that the drug product marketed by your firm has been made in accordance with the U.S. specifications and is the same product marketed legally in the United States. Therefore, the sale and distribution of this product on your Internet web site may be illegal in this country and may be in violation of Title 21 of the United States Code, Sections 331(a), 331(d), and 355(a).

Many prescription drugs available from foreign sources are either products for which there is no U.S. approved counterpart or foreign versions of FDA approved drugs. In either case, these products are not approved for use in the U.S. and therefore, it is illegal for a foreign source to ship these products into the U.S. In our experience, many drugs obtained from foreign sources that purport to be the same as U.S. approved prescription drugs have been of unknown quality. FDA approves a drug on the basis of scientific data submitted by the drug sponsor to demonstrate that the drug is safe and effective. We cannot provide assurance to the American public that the drug product ordered from your web site is the same product approved by FDA and prescribed by the consumer's physician. In addition, federal law prohibits the sale of prescription drugs to U.S. citizens without a valid prescription, 21 U.S.C. Section 353(b).

The agency is taking steps to warn our citizens that drugs promoted and sold via the Internet, from foreign sources, may not be approved for marketing in this country, and may not be legally imported. With copies of this letter, we are advising the regulatory drug officials in the countries from which you operate of these potential violations. In addition, we are advising the U.S. Customs Service through an Import Alert that all shipments offered for importation into the United States as a result of your activities may be detained and subject to refusal of entry.

FDA would like to take this opportunity to clarify the agency's policy concerning the importation of pharmaceutical products for personal use. For many years, FDA has permitted individuals and their physicians to bring into the United States small quantities of drugs sold abroad, but not approved in the U.S. for a patient's treatment of a serious condition. This compassionate approach has been applied to products that do not represent an unreasonable risk and for which there is no known commercialization or promotion to persons residing in the U.S. A patient seeking to import such product must also provide the name of the licensed physician in the U.S. responsible for his or her treatment with the unapproved drug product. The Ansomone® (somatropin) ordered from your web site does not meet the criteria in FDA's personal use policy.

This letter is not intended to be an all-inclusive review of your web site and products your firm may market to the United States. It is your responsibility to ensure that all products marketed by your firm are in compliance with applicable U.S. laws.

If you need additional information, or have questions concerning any products distributed through your web site, please contact FDA. You may reach FDA electronically (E-mail) Don Leggett at Leggett@CDER.FDA.GOV or you may provide written response via fax at (301) 594-2114 or hard copy letter to the letterhead address. You may reach FDA by telephone at (301) 594-0054.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

David J Horowitz , Esq.

Acting Director

Office of Compliance

Center for Drug Evaluation and Research

Food and Drug Administration