

SARASOTA, FLA -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) hosted a public forum today with federal and state authorities to combat the growing threat of illegal pill mills that have turned Florida into a national distribution center for deadly prescription drugs. Pill mills are the biggest single source of narcotic pills that claim an estimated seven lives a day in Florida.

"Many of these so-called pain clinics are nothing more than illegal drug distribution networks that bring untold misery to our children, our families and our communities," Buchanan said. "They need to be dealt with swiftly and firmly -- and those who are making money off the death and suffering of their victims should be sent to prison."

Last week, federal agents and police raided doctors' offices across South Florida in a sweep against rogue pain clinics that reportedly doled out 15 million tablets per year of the powerful narcotic oxycodone. Florida reportedly prescribes 10 times more oxycodone pills than all other states combined.

Those attending Buchanan's forum at Sarasota City Hall included U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) official Joseph Rannazzisi; U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) official Charles Watson; Florida Attorney General Special Prosecutor Dave Aronberg, and Sarasota and Manatee County Sheriffs Tom Knight and Brad Steube.

Buchanan said he is working on federal legislation to address the problem.

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