



# IPRC CONNECTIONS

*Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center*

APRIL 2020

IPR Center showcases benefits of its partnerships, teamwork to protect Americans



On behalf of the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center), I would like to take this opportunity to share a few thoughts regarding recent events here and around the world that have made us even more aware of our mission to promote national security by protecting the public's health and safety, the U.S. economy, our war fighters, and to stop predatory and illegal trade practices that threaten the U.S. and global economies.

Here at the IPR Center, we are very fortunate to work collaboratively as a team with 25 domestic and international partner agencies that have helped us open the door to business, industry, and representatives in both the public and private sectors. We are able to do this as part of a task force setting that continues to position this Center as a leading force in the protection of our nation's citizens and industry from transnational criminal organizations by enforcing laws that are protect intellectual property and support robust import and export controls.

Please be assured of our continued commitment to do our best to keep you informed of our efforts to balance our personnel and resources where they are needed most, and where we can best serve citizens with the level of enforcement and public safety strategies designed to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for everyone. I invite you to visit our website, [www.iprcenter.gov](http://www.iprcenter.gov) to learn more about our operational programs as well as timely updates on enforcement actions that will surely be a part of our focus as we move forward together. I would also like to encourage you to visit – and “like” us – as we post information on our Twitter page: @IPRCenter

I appreciate your patience and understanding during these challenging times and look forward to your continued support as we work together on our mission-driven priorities that will help set the stage for brighter days ahead.

*IPR Center Director Steve K. Francis*

## London arrest demonstrates global reach of Homeland Security Investigations

Special agents from Homeland Security Investigations in Los Angeles and London, along with special agents from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, worked with the City of London Police to arrest a West Sussex man in a post office near his home late last month after he was found to be making and distributing hundreds of fake COVID-19 treatment kits throughout the U.S. As a result of a global investigation by the IPR Center partner agencies, including U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Postal Inspection Service, he has been charged in the U.S. with smuggling mislabeled drugs into the U.S. as alleged treatments for those suffering from COVID-19. The full story can be found [here](#).

## HSI tip leads to pandemic-related arrest

Acting on a tip from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Canada, a Toronto man is in custody, charged in connection with several parcels of prohibited COVID-19 tests allegedly shipped in Canada and into the U.S. Working with the Toronto Police Service Financial Crimes Unit and CBP-Great Lakes, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Toronto was able to also coordinate assistance from the IPR Center to trace a parcel that was intercepted at the Canadian–U.S. border. The full story can be found [here](#).

## Man sentenced to 20 years in counterfeit drug case

A Philadelphia man has been sentenced to 20 years in federal prison and ordered to pay \$2.7 million in restitution for conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit drugs he purchased on the dark web with Bitcoin. This case was investigated by HSI-Philadelphia's Cyber Crimes Investigations Task Force, a multi-agency initiative targeting cyber-enabled criminal activity. The full story is posted [here](#).

## Billions in fake pharmaceuticals traded worldwide

A new report released by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates the total value of counterfeit pharmaceuticals traded worldwide is estimated at \$4 billion. According to data on customs seizures from 2014-2016, counterfeit antibiotics, lifestyle drugs and painkillers were the most frequently encountered. You can view the full report [here](#).

## IP enforcement training focuses on health and safety risks by counterfeit goods



The IPR Center, in collaboration with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) – Santo Domingo, provided intellectual property enforcement training to customs officials, police investigators and prosecutors from the Dominican Republic, Anguilla, Bermuda, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, St. Lucia and Trinidad. The regional training was held

in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic and was supported by HSI offices in the Caribbean, Guatemala City, Kingston, Panama City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Key West, Los Angeles, and New York. The U.S. Departments of State (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs), Justice, Customs and Border Protection, Patent and Trademark Office and Mexican Tax and Customs Administration Service were also represented.

The training workshop provided participants with an increased understanding of the complexities and threats identified in the intellectual property environment, including the increasing health and safety risks posed by counterfeit goods. The training featured HSI presentations on pharmaceuticals, cell phones, footwear products, and basic methods to combat transnational cyber-enabled intellectual property crime. Industry representatives from Apple, Colgate-Palmolive, Diageo, Motion Picture Association, Pfizer, Philip Morris International, Syngenta, and Underwriters Laboratories delivered presentations outlining their enforcement efforts and collaboration with law enforcement to combat illicit trade.

## Diamonds are becoming a criminal's best friend

The IPR Center hosted representatives from the Gemological Institute of America, Inc. (GIA) to learn more about the work of the Institute and – more importantly – how criminal enterprises are turning to gemstones as a substitute for large sums of cash payments generated as the result of transnational criminal activity. GIA Operations Security Manager Robert Claborn provided an overview of GIA's law enforcement officer training program that is taught by senior GIA gemology instructors to give law enforcement the opportunity to learn about diamonds and other gemstones, how they are graded, assessed, and valued. He also described how to recognize the norms of the diamond and gemstone industry.

GIA – established in 1931 – billboards itself as the world's foremost authority on diamonds, colored stones, and pearls. A public benefit, nonprofit institute, GIA has positioned itself to be the leading source of knowledge, standards, and education in gems and jewelry. You can learn more about them here: [GIA](#)

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### *Did you know...*

that you can read what IPR Center Director Steve Francis has to say about the Department of Homeland Security *Report to the President on Combating Trafficking of Counterfeit and Pirated Goods*, by visiting [www.iprcenter.gov](http://www.iprcenter.gov) The story was first published [here](#).



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the "Report IP Theft" button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>.

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of *IPRC Connections*, please contact Chuck Jackson, [charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov), or (703) 603-3941. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter: [@IPRCenter](https://twitter.com/IPRCenter)