FDA targets Walgreens as biggest youth tobacco sale violator

U.S. health officials plan to ask for a meeting with top management from Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. to discuss what they said was a pattern of illegal tobacco sales to minors at the pharmacy giant's stores.

The Food and Drug Administration said Thursday that it would seek a Walgreens store in Miami from selling tobacco products for 30 days. But the agency also said that 10% of the 1,095 Walgreens stores it inspected had illegally sold tobacco products to minors.

The FDA inspected 6,394 Walgreens stores, agency spokesman Michael Pollack said. He said Walgreens has received more than 1,350 warning letters from the FDA and been hit with $2 million in fines for selling tobacco to minors since 2010.

"Walgreens is currently the top-violating among pharmacies that sell tobacco products," the agency said in a statement.

Fake Walgreens pharmacist handled over two dozen presentations,

California officials say;

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said the agency is considering additional enforcement actions against Walgreens to "address their record of retail tobacco sales to youths." The company has said recently that it is pulling back on retail sales and broader change in its strategy.

Walgreens said it takes the matter “very seriously” and has enacted a number of steps to address the problem, including requiring store decks to ask consumers buying tobacco for identification, regardless of age, and imposing tougher disciplinary actions against employees who don’t follow its policies.

"We recognize the seriousness of this issue and welcome the opportunity to meet with the FDA to discuss the focus of the steps we are taking," Walgreens spokesman Jim Cohn said in an emailed statement.

Shares of the company dipped 0.3% to $84.24 on Thursday.

An "epidemic of nicotine addictions" among kids prompts FDA to get tough on e-cigarette makers;

Gottlieb said he was particularly concerned about how e-cigarettes are marketed in a pharmacy setting, which consumer groups and public health experts say can make them more appealing to kids. CVS Health Corp., the nation’s largest drugstore chain that recently stopped selling tobacco products, has ended its subscription plans.

"The FDA will continue to hold retailers accountable by vigorously enforcing the law," Gottlieb said.

In December, Walgreens posted stronger quarterly results and said it would cut costs. While prescription increases in its pharmacies, same-store sales rose, which include items such as champers and beauty products as well as tobacco. Still, 12.2% of the United States, Walgreens blamed the decline in part on the.elderly substituting tobacco.

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