

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TAKES ACTION AGAINST FLORIDA DOCTOR**  
*~DOH issues Emergency Suspension Order for Dr. James Alexander Cocores~*

**TALLAHASSEE-** Yesterday, the Florida Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO), took action against a Florida doctor accused of prescribing pain medications without proper examination or medical justification. The Department has issued an Emergency Suspension Order (ESO) for Dr. James Alexander Cocores, immediately suspending his license to practice medicine. In addition, Cocores was arrested by the PBSO on charges of drug trafficking and writing unlawful prescriptions.

In February 2011, the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO) received information that while practicing at Southcoast Psychotherapy & Education Associates, Inc. (Southcoast), Dr. Cocores was prescribing pain medication to patients without examining them. In May 2011, Dr. Cocores left his employment with Southcoast and set up his own medical practice. In August 2011, an undercover agent from the PBSO Multi-Agency Diversion Taskforce, presented to Dr. Cocores while posing as a patient with psychiatric issues and a pre-existing back injury. Over the course of nine months, the agent visited Dr. Cocores a total of nine times, during which Dr. Cocores prescribed controlled substances without appropriate evaluation.

"The Department is committed to eradicating pill mills and unlawful prescribing in our state," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "We will not tolerate blatant disregard for patient safety, regulation or ethics in our state. Patient care and safety must be protected."

Emergency suspension or restriction orders are not considered final agency action but are imposed when the subject's actions pose an immediate serious danger to public health, as specified by section 456.074, Florida Statutes. The subject is entitled to a hearing before final action is taken by a regulatory board or by DOH. However, the ESO will remain in effect until final disciplinary action is taken, the suspension is lifted, or the case is successfully appealed.

To view the most recent ESOs, EROs, Final Orders and Administrative Complaints, please visit <http://newsroom.doh.state.fl.us/2012/02/21/most-recent-esoserosadministrative-complaints/>. For other information on Medical Quality Assurance, including information about enforcement terms or definitions, boards and councils, or the health care practitioner licensing process itself, visit <http://newsroom.doh.state.fl.us/category/healthcare-licensing/>.

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