

Film examines anti-malaria drug

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CARLSBAD – A documentary on the controversial anti-malaria drug Lariam will premiere this weekend at the Carlsbad Village Theatre. “Taken as Directed” chronicles what its producers believe are the severe side effects of the drug, including suicide and brain damage.

The film tells the story of five people who contend that Lariam destroyed their lives. Carlsbad resident and one-time competitive surfer Danny Rocha is one of those profiled, as is former Camp Pendleton Marine Patrick Farrell, who killed himself after taking Lariam while serving in Somalia.

The pharmaceutical giant Roche makes the drug, which was developed by the Army in the 1970s. The Food and Drug Administration approved Lariam in 1989.

The Pentagon still distributes Lariam to combat a tough form of malaria even though Roche has issued increasingly stronger warnings for the drug's use over the years. The drug-maker did not return calls seeking comment.

“Taken as Directed” will be shown at 7 p.m. tomorrow and at 5 p.m. Sunday. The premiere will also raise funds for the film's distribution. Tickets are \$25.

For more information, go to www.lariaminfo.org or call (415) 492-8424.

–Rick Rogers