



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada



APhA

*For Every Pharmacist.
For All of Pharmacy.*

American and Canadian pharmacist associations warn that drug importation policies could put patients at risk

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) are issuing a joint statement opposing U.S. federal legislation or executive actions authorizing personal and commercial importation of prescription drugs from Canada. While we recognize the desire to address affordability issues in the United States, we strongly oppose the importation of prescription drugs from Canada because of the risks these policies pose to patient safety and continuity of care.

Patient safety and optimal medication use are among our top concerns as pharmacists when providing patient care. When pharmacists dispense medications, they review and assess all available health information to ensure that medications are safe and appropriate for their patients. This includes identifying possible drug interactions and other adverse events and communicating and resolving any concerns with the patients' prescribers.

Canadian pharmacies may only dispense medications prescribed by a Canadian prescriber. This regulation is in place to protect the safety of patients by ensuring that physicians and pharmacists have established relationships with their patients and knowledge of their medical histories. As such, recent drug importation policies from states in America all pose additional challenges. For example, for U.S. patients to obtain their medication from a Canadian pharmacy, they would need to see a Canadian physician directly or have a cosigned prescription from a U.S. and Canadian physician with whom the patient has an established relationship. These processes can lead to fragmented care and pose safety issues for the patient, as their Canadian physician and pharmacist may not have access to their full health record.

In addition to potentially exacerbating legitimate supply chain issues that impact patient safety, such as Canadian drug shortages and recalls, importation policies may encourage patients to purchase medications from unlicensed and often unregulated online pharmacies. Some online pharmacies are entities selling counterfeit drugs and operating outside Canadian and American laws. These entities are difficult to detect and control due to their sophistication and the large number of them in operation. Should the importation policies advance in U.S. federal legislation or executive actions, we anticipate an influx of U.S. patients receiving illicit, counterfeit, [misbranded](#), and/or otherwise harmful products from websites posing as Canadian online pharmacies. As organizations representing

Canadian and American pharmacists, CPhA and APhA are eager to protect patients and clarify the implications of drug importation policies for patients and health care providers in our countries.

About the American Pharmacists Association

APhA is the only organization advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in all practice settings, including but not limited to community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care, and enhance public health.

About the Canadian Pharmacists Association

CPhA is the uniting national voice of pharmacy and the pharmacist profession in Canada. As pharmacists undertake an enhanced role in the delivery of health care services, CPhA ensures that the profession is recognized as a national leader in health care, influencing the policies, programs, budgets, and initiatives affecting the profession and the health of Canadians. More information is available at www.pharmacists.ca.