HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAMPAIGN FACT SHEET

Facts About Online Drug Sellers

- A recent review of more than 11,000 websites selling prescription medications to U.S. consumers found approximately 96% appear to be in conflict with U.S. laws1; 89% of illegal online pharmacies don’t require a prescription;2 and 20 new websites selling prescription medicines are launched every day.3

- 65% of online search results for prescription drugs lead U.S. consumers to illegal and unsafe websites.4

- Buying prescription medicines from illegal online pharmacies increases the risk of credit card and identity theft.5

- Nearly one in four adult consumers has purchased prescription medicines online and almost one in five of those indicated that they bought from a website that was not associated with a local pharmacy or health insurance plan.6

- 50% of medicines sold online by pharmacy websites that hide their physical street address are fake.7

- Products sold by illegal online drugs sellers often contain little or no active ingredients, are manufactured in unsafe conditions, and/or contain floor wax, mercury, concrete, chalk, boric acid, road tar, paint, anti-freeze and other deadly poisons.8

Facts About Counterfeit Medicines

- Worth $200 billion a year, the market for counterfeit pharmaceuticals now eclipses almost everything else in the underground economy, including prostitution, human trafficking and illegal arms sales.9

- It is estimated that up to a third of the world’s prescription drugs are counterfeit, although this figure is closer to two-thirds in some developing countries.10,11 Of these, more than half are classified as “lifesaving”, such as treatments for cardiovascular disease, central nervous system disorders and anti-infectives.12

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1 Internet Drug Outlet Identification Program, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 2016
2 Buying Medicine Online – What Are the Risks, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
3 The Internet Pharmacy Market in 2016: LegitScript and the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies, January 2016
5 What You Need to Know Before You Buy Prescription Medications Online, Disease Management, 2015
6 Buying Prescription Medicines Online, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2013
7 Buying Medicine Online – What Are the Risks, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
8 Poisons Found in Counterfeit Medicines, Partnership for Safe Medicines, 2012
9 Counterfeiting: An Industry Three Times Larger than the Illicit Global Drug Trade, Sophic Capital, 2014
10 Counterfeiting: An Industry Three Times Larger than the Illicit Global Drug Trade, Sophic Capital, 2014
11 Counterfeit Medicines and the Role of IP in Patient Safety, IP Watchdog, 2016
12 Counterfeit Drug Penetration into Global Legitimate Supply Chains, American Journal of Tropic Medicine and Hygiene, April 2015
Facts About Healthcare Providers and Their Knowledge of Online Drug Sellers

- There are almost 6 million healthcare providers in the U.S. including approximately one million primary care and specialist physicians\(^{13}\), 670,000 pharmacists\(^{14}\) and pharmacy technicians\(^{15}\), four million registered nurses\(^{16}\) and 200,000 nurse practitioners\(^{17}\); and 100,000 physician assistants.\(^{18}\)

- ASOP Global and the Federation of State Medical Boards worked with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, University of California San Diego and LegitScript to develop “Internet Drug Sellers: What Providers Need To Know”, a free online continuing education course for pharmacists and physicians.

- Before taking the course, less than 10% of the participating pharmacists and physicians said they were very aware that counterfeit prescription drugs are being sold on the Internet; almost 80% “never or rarely” speak to their patients about the risks of associated with buying prescription medicines online; and 94% of the participants were totally unfamiliar with the current tools and resources available to identify fraudulent online pharmacies.

- After taking the course, 81% of participants said that they would change their methods of treatment; providers reported a 10-fold increase in the expected frequency in which they planned to discuss the risks of buying prescription medicine online with their patients; and nearly 90% of participants agreed that the course will help to improve their practice.

Facts About Prescription Drugs in the U.S.

- U.S. spending on prescription drugs is projected to continue climbing faster than overall health care expenditures; cumulatively from 2013 to 2018, prescription drug spending is predicted to rise by an average of 7.3% annually.\(^{19}\)

- The number of prescriptions dispensed in 2015 reached 4.5 billion and total spending on medicines in the U.S. reached $310 billion, up 8.5 percent from the previous year.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{13}\) Kaiser Family Foundation, [http://kaiser.am/2c6gnHk](http://kaiser.am/2c6gnHk), April 2016
\(^{16}\) Kaiser Family Foundation, [http://kaiser.am/2ddoN02](http://kaiser.am/2ddoN02), April 2016
\(^{18}\) Kaiser Family Foundation, [http://kaiser.am/2f7YzAt](http://kaiser.am/2f7YzAt), June 2016
\(^{19}\) Observations in Healthcare Spending, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 2016