

# CEO ISSUE UPDATE

## Rising Drug Costs Attract Seniors to Illegal Online Pharmacies

With an estimated 49 percent growth of the U.S. senior population by 2030 and out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries skyrocketing, the [Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies](#) (ASOP Global), [Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies](#) (CSIP) and [National Consumers League](#) (NCL) are joining forces to educate seniors and their caregivers about the health and financial risks associated with buying prescription medicines from illegal or rogue online pharmacies and [provide the tools they need](#) to stay safe when shopping for prescription drugs online.

"Escalating costs for hundreds of drugs prescribed to treat chronic conditions not necessarily covered fully by Medicare make it more likely that seniors, who often are living on fixed incomes, will turn to the internet to look for less expensive options. For twelve specialty drugs used to treat cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and Hepatitis C, Medicare Part D enrollees face at least \$4,000 and as much as nearly \$12,000 in annual out-of-pocket costs in 2016 for one drug alone," said Libby Baney, ASOP global executive director.

A recent review of more than 11,000 websites selling prescription medications online to U.S. consumers found approximately 96 percent do not comply with U.S. laws and 50 percent of medicines sold online are fake or counterfeit. Counterfeit products sold online may contain little or no active ingredients and/or dangerous and often deadly poisons, including floor wax, mercury, concrete, chalk, boric acid, road tar, paint or anti-freeze. Interpol estimates that counterfeit medicines are responsible for up to one million deaths annually worldwide.

As a founding member of ASOP, NACDS and its allies have consistently advocated for, and applauded, steps by the U.S. Congress and federal agencies to improve the effort to confront illegal online drug sellers.