

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

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

⁴ [Online Pharmacy Market Spotlight Report: The United States](#), ASOP Global and LegitScript, July 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 physicians¹³; 670,000 pharmacists¹⁴ and pharmacy technicians¹⁵; four million registered nurses¹⁶ and 200,000 nurse practitioners¹⁷; 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

¹³ Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kaiserf.am/2c6gnHk>, April 2016

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Labor <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291051.htm>, May 2015

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes292052.htm>, May, 2015

¹⁶ Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kaiserf.am/2ddsN0Z>, April 2016

¹⁷ American Association of Nurse Practitioners, <http://bit.ly/2bzwHTJ>, June 2016

¹⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, <http://kaiserf.am/2f7YzAt>, June 2016

¹⁹ [Observations in Healthcare Spending](#), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 2016

²⁰ [Medicines Use and Spending in the U.S.: A Review of 2015 and Outlook to 2020](#), IMS 2016