

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SURVEY REVEALS MAJORITY OF INDIANA CONSUMERS ARE UNAWARE OF RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ONLINE PHARMACIES, OPPOSE LEGALIZING PRESCRIPTION DRUG IMPORTATION

Washington, DC (July 19, 2017) – Results from the most comprehensive survey of 500 Indiana residents* to evaluate consumer behavior and perceptions about online pharmacies were released today by the [Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies](#) (ASOP Global).

“This is especially timely because as millions of Americans face the prospect of changes in their healthcare coverage should Congress repeal or replace the Affordable Care Act, or legalize prescription drug importation from Canada, people may turn to the Internet to access prescription medicines,” said [ASOP Global’s Executive Director, Libby Baney](#).

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

While 55% of those polled have bought or would consider buying prescription medicines online, 95% said they were not aware of the [tools available to verify the safety of online pharmacies](#).

“These statistics are alarming since there are 33,000 illegal online pharmacies at any given time and 100% of Internet searches for ‘buy medicine online’ lead consumers to dangerous pharmacy websites, increasing their chances of receiving counterfeit medications from unknown sources,” Baney said.

Almost one-in-five (19%) of previous online pharmacy users said they found their online pharmacy website through a simple search. “These consumers just typed the name of their medication into a search engine and chose a site at random, rather than ordering from websites associated with their local pharmacies, such as CVS.com, or from those approved by their insurance plans or the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy,” Baney explained.

“Since [Purdue University’s research](#) found that even licensed pharmacists typically cannot differentiate legitimate from illegal online pharmacies just by looking at a website, the average consumer is all the more susceptible to falling prey to illegal pharmacy websites that offer ‘too good to be true’ prices, claims of selling ‘genuine Canadian medicines’, and other tactics that put patients at risk,” added ASOP Global board member [John B. Hertig, PharmD, MS, CPPS](#), associate director at the Purdue’s [Center for Medication Safety Advancement](#) (CMSA).

“It also is disturbing that 91% of respondents have not discussed the risks associated with buying medicines online with their healthcare providers before ordering from these websites,” added James Fuller, PharmD, who serves as president of the [Indianapolis Coalition for Patient Safety](#) (ICPS), an ASOP Global member. “This makes the partnership between ASOP Global and ICPS to educate providers and patients about online pharmacy safety in healthcare settings across Indiana even more critical.”

(more)

* Poll demographics mimic age and gender for national averages

CANADIAN ONLINE PHARMACIES

Only 5% of poll respondents said they would be “very likely” to use a government-sponsored list of “safe” Canadian websites, as promised by members of Congress who support legislation that would legalize importation of prescription drugs from Canada.

In addition, 59% of respondents said they were opposed to legalizing importation after being provided with information specifically pertaining to Canadian online pharmacies, including:

- **Hundreds of illegal Canadian online pharmacies do not require valid prescriptions for controlled substances like Percocet, Vicodin and fentanyl**, so legalizing the importation of prescription drugs from Canada will exacerbate the U.S. opioid epidemic by making it easier for those struggling with substance abuse and drug traffickers to purchase these drugs online;
- **Canadian officials have said they cannot guarantee that Americans will receive safe medicines when ordering from Canadian online pharmacies**; in fact, the FDA found that 85% of medicines sold to Americans by Canadian online pharmacies are from other foreign countries; and
- **Since 2010, there have been more than 200 felony counts against networks operating 400,000 websites affiliated with Canadian online pharmacies**; however, U.S. consumers often have no legal remedies available if they are harmed by medication purchased from a Canadian pharmacy website.

MORE EDUCATION IS NECESSARY TO KEEP AMERICANS SAFE

"All of these findings prove that much more education is needed," Baney said. "In addition to encouraging people to [verify the safety of their pharmacy website](#) before buying prescription medicines online and take advantage of organizations that [help patients save money on medicines](#), ASOP Global will continue to work tirelessly to advocate for and protect consumers around the globe."

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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR SAFE ONLINE PHARMACIES

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the [Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies](#) (ASOP Global) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to combatting illegal online pharmacies and counterfeit medicines to make the Internet safe for consumers worldwide.

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