

## KEY DATA ABOUT ILLEGAL ONLINE DRUG SELLERS AND COUNTERFEIT MEDICINES

- It is estimated that up to a third of the world's prescription drugs are counterfeit<sup>1</sup>, although this figure is closer to two-thirds in some developing countries.<sup>2</sup> Of these, more than half are classified as lifesaving drugs, such as treatments for malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>4</sup>
- 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. laws and pharmacy practice standards<sup>5</sup> and 20 new websites selling prescription medicines are launched every day.<sup>6</sup>
- 65% of online search results for prescription drugs lead U.S. consumers to illegal and unsafe websites.<sup>7</sup>
- 50% of medicines sold online by pharmacy websites that hide their physical street address are fake and 89% of illegal online pharmacies don't require a prescription.<sup>8</sup>
- 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.<sup>9</sup>
- Buying prescription medicines from illegal online pharmacies increases the risk of credit card and identity theft.<sup>10</sup>
- 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.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Counterfeiting: An Industry Three Times Larger than the Illicit Global Drug Trade, Sophic Capital, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Counterfeit Medicines and the Role of IP in Patient Safety, IP Watchdog, 2016

<sup>3</sup> The World's Medical Supply Chain Is Riddled With Counterfeit Drugs, New Republic, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Counterfeiting: An Industry Three Times Larger than the Illicit Global Drug Trade, Sophic Capital, 2014

<sup>5</sup> Internet Drug Outlet Identification Program, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 2016

<sup>6</sup> The Internet Pharmacy Market in 2016, LegitScript and the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies, January 2016

<sup>7</sup> Online Pharmacy Market Spotlight Report: The United States, ASOP Global and LegitScript, July 2016

<sup>8</sup> Buying Medicine Online – What Are the Risks, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

<sup>9</sup> Poisons Found in Counterfeit Medicines, Partnership for Safe Medicines, 2012

<sup>10</sup> What You Need to Know Before You Buy Prescription Medications Online, Disease Management, 2015

<sup>11</sup> Buying Prescription Medicines Online, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2013