

## WHAT PROVIDERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FERTILITY MEDICINES SOLD ONLINE

**Do not let the allure of lower prices put your patients' lives or treatment at risk.**

**Ensure patients are aware of risks associated with shopping online for fertility drugs.**

**Be Smart. Stay Safe. [BuySafeRx.pharmacy](http://BuySafeRx.pharmacy).**

### GENERAL FACTS ABOUT ONLINE PHARMACIES

- There are between 30,000 to 45,000 online pharmacies operating at any one time.<sup>1</sup>
- 20 new illegal online pharmacy sites launch each day.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 96% of online pharmacies websites are operating illegally, failing to comply with applicable laws and safety standards.
  - 89% of illegal online pharmacies do not require a valid prescription.<sup>3</sup>
  - Nearly 10% of illegal online pharmacy sites sell controlled substances.<sup>4</sup>
- Products sold by illegal online pharmacies often contain too much, too little or no active ingredient; are manufactured in unsafe conditions; and/or contain potentially deadly poisons.<sup>5</sup>
- 100% of results for “buy medicine online” lead U.S. consumers to illegal and unsafe websites.<sup>6</sup>
- 55% of consumers polled have bought or would consider buying prescription medicines online, yet 86% of those who have bought online did not discuss it with their healthcare providers.<sup>7</sup>
- Only 5% of Americans report knowing about ways to verify the safety of online pharmacies.

### THE SALE OF FERTILITY MEDICATIONS ONLINE

- Hundreds of websites offer fertility and contraceptive products, often without a prescription or pharmacy license in the jurisdiction where the patient is located.
- Illegal online pharmacies sell all types of medicines, including birth control, fertility medications and fertility test strips. These products may be falsified or substandard.
- Fertility medicines often need to be kept at specific temperatures (cold-chain) to be effective. Even if the product sold online is legitimate, there is no way to tell if it was stored and transported properly, putting patients at risk of receiving no therapeutic benefits.
- *What about IVFmeds.com, fertilitydrugsonline.com, ivf.towndrugstore.com, or ivfprescriptions.com?* These and similar sites are not legitimate as they offer worldwide shipping of prescription products in violation of numerous countries' applicable laws, and provide no evidence of having valid pharmacy licenses, and/or do not disclose the location of the pharmacy itself. If the online seller is willing to cut corners and not comply with applicable laws in these ways, it is hard to believe the seller would otherwise comply with drug safety laws and practices.
- Fertility treatment – often involving multiple protocols and cycles – is difficult enough. Adding in the variable of that a patient may be taking substandard or counterfeit medicines bought online further complicates treatment, making it nearly impossible to know whether the protocol failed, the medicine failed, both or neither.

<sup>1</sup> [Internet Drug Outlet Identification Program](#), National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 2016

<sup>2</sup> [The Internet Pharmacy Market in 2016](#), LegitScript and the Center for Safe Internet Pharmacies, January 2016

<sup>3</sup> [Buying Medicine Online – What Are the Risks](#), National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

<sup>4</sup> [Internet Drug Outlet Identification Program](#), National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, 2016

<sup>5</sup> [Poisons Found in Counterfeit Medicines](#), Partnership for Safe Medicines, 2012

<sup>6</sup> LegitScript, 2017

<sup>7</sup> [ASOP Global Consumer Behavior and Perception Poll](#), May 2017

## HOW TO HELP FERTILITY PATIENTS ACCESS SAFE MEDICINES

1. Ask patients where they get their medicines: **Know where they go.**
2. Provide recommendations for trusted **specialty pharmacies.**
3. Share information about **prescription drug discounts.**
4. If patient is interested in online pharmacies, **direct them to look** for “.pharmacy” in website addresses, or verify that the pharmacy website is safe and legal before they buy by visiting [www.buysaferx.pharmacy](http://www.buysaferx.pharmacy).
5. **Share the fertility brochure** from ASOP Global and RESOLVE on the issue.