

**ASOP Global Statement Regarding the Announcement of a Drug Importation Working Group at FDA**

**Washington (July 19, 2018)** – In response to yesterday's announcement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of its new drug importation working group at the Food and Drug Administration, the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP Global) issued the following statement:

While we appreciate the Administration's efforts find ways to increase patient access to safe, affordable prescription medicines, ASOP Global is concerned that this newest proposed approach to importation could nonetheless put patient safety at risk.

The economic incentives that demand for convenient, lower-cost medications creates – both domestically and internationally – has driven criminals to make and sell billions of dollars worth of dangerous and deadly counterfeit drugs.

If HHS authorizes drug importation, we should anticipate increased proliferation of drug counterfeiting – especially for high cost and/or high demand medicines. The government already struggles to stop unsafe medicine from entering the country through loopholes in the USPS. Increasing the volume of drugs from other countries would stress an already overburdened safety system.

Importation would make America reliant on foreign governments to regulate and police the pharmaceutical supply chain outside the U.S., while implying to consumers that it is safe to buy any medicine from foreign sources. Research shows the opposite to be true. Drugs made in places like India and China – often sold under the guise of being from Canada – can be manufactured in unsafe conditions; contain too much, too little, or no active ingredients; and/or may be made using dangerous and sometimes deadly substances, including fentanyl and other poisons.

ASOP Global looks forward to discussing our views with the Administration. We share their goal of increasing patient access to safe, affordable medicine and welcome the opportunity to provide data and insights into why importation is not the solution to high drug prices.