

COMBATTING ILLEGAL ONLINE PHARMACIES AND COUNTERFEIT MEDICINES TO MAKE THE INTERNET SAFER FOR PATIENTS

About ASOP Global: [The Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies](#) (ASOP Global) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization dedicated to combating illegal online pharmacies and counterfeit medicines. Founded in 2009, ASOP Global's mission is to make the internet safer for patients through research, education, advocacy, and collaboration.

ASOP Global's U.S.-based [members](#) include 30+ nonprofit groups, prescription discount programs, academic institutions, patient organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers, health care providers, pharmacy organizations, shippers, payment processors, and internet security companies.

Illegal Online Pharmacies Put Public Health at Risk for Profit

- At any given time, [95%](#) of the roughly [35,000 online pharmacies worldwide](#) operate illegally, in violation of state and/or federal law and pharmacy practice standards.
- These sites [threaten American lives](#) by selling medicines without a prescription, operating without a license, and peddling fake drugs, often containing dangerous – even deadly— ingredients like paint thinner, fentanyl, mercury, and tar.
- Worth [\\$200 billion a year](#), the market for counterfeit pharmaceuticals is growing by 20% annually – twice the legitimate pharmaceutical market rate.
- A majority of Americans take prescription medication daily, and [35% have now reported using an online pharmacy](#) to buy medicines for themselves or someone in their care.
- Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing demand for health care delivered virtually and convenient, lower-cost medications sold online has caused an explosion of [new malicious websites](#) – at least 100,000 in March 2020 alone – with the sole purpose of scamming patients with fake COVID-19 cures and treatments.
- While half of Americans would consider purchasing medication online for everything from medicines for chronic conditions to COVID-related products like vaccines, most misunderstand or underestimate the risk of illegal online pharmacies.
- [7 in 10 Americans erroneously](#) believe that if an online pharmacy website appears at or near the top of search engine results, it is likely to be legitimate, while 4 in 10 Americans incorrectly believe that [all websites](#) offering online healthcare services and/or prescription medications have FDA or state regulator sign off.

Policy Solutions: To date, U.S. policy has failed to protect Americans from the widespread internet drug sellers who profit at the expense of patients' safety. However, supporting specific policies at the federal level could help curtail this online threat. ASOP Global's online patient safety policy priorities include:

- Protecting U.S. supply chain security by opposing [drug importation](#) schemes that aren't safe, don't save money, and won't work – starting with rescinding the [Importation of Prescription Drugs Final Rule](#)
- Increasing [internet accountability](#) through targeted reforms to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act
- Safeguarding online transparency by restoring access to accurate [WHOIS data](#)
- Stopping domain name registries and registrars from facilitating and profiting from online crime by requiring them to [lock and suspend](#) suspicious sites

Please visit ASOP Global's website for additional information on [drug importation](#) and [internet accountability](#).