

Wednesday, November 22, 2006

The Honourable Tony Clement, PC, MP
Minister of Health
70 Columbine Driveway, Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you as representatives of the Canadian Pharmacists Association, the Ontario Pharmacists Association, the Canadian Association for Pharmacy Distribution Management and the Best Medicines Coalition. Together, we represent Canadian pharmacists, members of the supply chain and patients who believe that the government should institute an immediate, simple and straightforward ban on the export, both bulk and retail, of prescription drugs produced for Canadians. This is needed to protect Canadian patients and preserve a vital national health resource.

We are worried about the integrity, security and safety of Canada's prescription drug supply as a consequence of recent U.S. legislative and enforcement changes that allow importation by U.S. patients of 90 day supplies of prescription drugs from Canada. We are even more concerned about the clearly expressed intent of American lawmakers to move quickly to "full-blown" legalization of prescription drug importation both by patients and in bulk.

The attached Joint Statement, which has been drafted and approved by all the undersigned groups, spells out our specific concerns with the cross-border prescription drug trade, specifically the potential for drug shortages, price increases, and the growing risk of counterfeit drugs.

We have also taken note of your statements prior to the US mid-term elections that you are monitoring the situation and that you do not believe it is necessary at this point to restrict Canadian drug exports. The coalition appreciates the attention that you have given this important issue. However, in light of the changing political landscape in Washington and of recent statements by the Democratic leadership that legalizing re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada will be a priority for the new Congress, we believe it is time for the Government of Canada to take immediate steps to ban the bulk and retail exports of prescription drugs.

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We request an opportunity to meet with you within the next two weeks to brief you further on the issue, to provide our expert analysis and to discuss measures we recommend to maintain the integrity, security and safety of the Canadian prescription drug supply. Our goal is to protect the health and well-being of Canadian patients and the general public.

We respectfully request your urgent attention to this matter, mindful of the upcoming House of Commons holiday recess and the timing of the start of the next Congressional session in February 2007.

Your office can contact Louise Crandall of the Canadian Pharmacists Association at 613-523-7877 (ext 267) for scheduling purposes.

Regards,



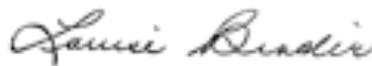
Executive Director
Canadian Pharmacists Association



CEO
Ontario Pharmacists Association



President & CEO
Canadian Association for Pharmacy
Distribution Management



Chair
Best Medicines Coalition

Enclosure(s): 1

c.c. Minister of Public Security
Opposition Health Critics
Chair and Vice Chairs of House of Commons Standing Committee on Health
Opposition Public Security Critics

