



Canadian
Pharmacists
Association Association des
pharmaciens
du Canada



APhA

*For Every Pharmacist.
For All of Pharmacy.*

American and Canadian pharmacist associations warn that recent drug importation policies could put patients at risk

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) are issuing a joint statement opposing U.S. federal legislation or executive actions, as the United States expands implementation of Section 804 importation programs, including FDA authorization of Colorado's program, authorizing personal and commercial importation of prescription drugs from Canada. We recognize that many Americans face significant challenges accessing affordable prescription medicines and support efforts to improve affordability. However, large-scale importation from Canada is not a sustainable solution. We strongly oppose the importation of prescription drugs from Canada because of the risks these policies pose to patient safety, continuity of care, and drug supply chain integrity.

Pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring the safe and effective use of medications. This includes assessing medication appropriateness, identifying potential drug interactions and monitoring for adverse events. Recent U.S. drug importation initiatives, including those in Colorado and Florida, pose additional safety and operational challenges. Colorado's Canadian Prescription Drug Importation Program [claims](#) that the program "will pose no additional risk to the public's health and safety." However, this statement does not acknowledge that Canadian pharmacies may only dispense medications prescribed by a Canadian prescriber. This [regulation](#) is in place to protect the safety of patients by ensuring that physicians and pharmacists have established relationships with their patients and knowledge of their medical histories. For example, to obtain a medication from a Canadian pharmacy, U.S. patients would be required either to consult a Canadian physician directly or to have a prescription co-signed by both a U.S. and Canadian physician with whom the patient has an established clinical relationship. These processes can lead to fragmented or delayed care and pose safety issues for the patient, as their Canadian physician and pharmacist may not have access to patient's complete medical history and can lead to inappropriate and unsafe use of medications.

Colorado's Drug Importation Program plans to import drugs through a U.S. wholesaler and a subsidiary located in Canada. Even if prescription drugs are imported in bulk quantities directly from manufacturers or wholesalers in Canada, there will still be a continuity-of-care issue, as patients would only be able to acquire those drugs approved under the program in this manner, likely requiring them to go to multiple pharmacies. Given the lack of interoperability, the patient may be at increased risk of drug-drug interactions, adverse events, and duplicative or unnecessary medications if they fail to inform each of their pharmacists and other health care

providers about all medications they are currently taking and whether they are filling medications at other pharmacies or taking medications from other prescribers.

In addition to potentially exacerbating legitimate supply chain issues that impact patient safety, such as Canadian drug shortages and recalls, importation policies may encourage patients to purchase medications from unlicensed and often unregulated online pharmacies. Some online pharmacies are selling counterfeit drugs and operating outside Canadian and American laws. These entities are difficult to detect and control due to their sophistication and the large number of them in operation. Should the importation policies advance in U.S. federal legislation or executive actions, we anticipate an influx of U.S. patients receiving illicit, counterfeit, [misbranded](#), and/or otherwise harmful products from websites posing as Canadian online pharmacies. As organizations representing Canadian and American pharmacists, CPhA and APhA are eager to protect patients and clarify the implications of drug importation policies for patients and health care providers in our countries.

From a Canadian perspective, large-scale exportation of medications to the U.S could significantly affect Canada's domestic drug supply. Canada's pharmaceutical supply system is designed to meet the needs of its population, and increased demand from outside the country may contribute to or exacerbate drug shortages, thereby affecting Canadian patients' access to essential therapies. Beyond the immediate impact on drug availability, diverting medicines intended for Canadian patients also weakens health system resilience by increasing vulnerability during manufacturing disruptions, future drug shortages and public health emergencies. Even limited export programs risk exacerbating existing drug shortages and reducing timely access to medications for Canadian patients. Any importation framework should fully consider the impact on medication availability in Canada and the potential consequences for patient care in both the U.S. and Canada.

We therefore urge the FDA and state governments to reconsider these policies due to significant risks to patient safety, continuity of care, and supply chain stability. We encourage continued collaboration between governments, regulators, and healthcare professionals to identify sustainable solutions that address medication affordability while preserving patient safety. These solutions should include strengthening domestic pricing strategies, supporting competition, enhancing supply chain resilience, and leveraging the expertise of pharmacists in medication management and patient care services.

About the American Pharmacists Association

APhA is the only organization advancing the entire pharmacy profession. APhA represents pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in all practice settings, including but not limited to community pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, specialty pharmacies, community health centers, physician offices, ambulatory clinics, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and government facilities. Our members strive to improve medication use, advance patient care, and enhance public health.

About the Canadian Pharmacists Association

CPhA is the uniting national voice of pharmacy and the pharmacist profession in Canada. As pharmacists undertake an enhanced role in the delivery of health care services, CPhA ensures that the profession is recognized as a national leader in health care, influencing the policies, programs, budgets, and initiatives affecting the profession and the health of Canadians. More information is available at www.pharmacists.ca.