



April 25, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-7010

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-7010

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC), I am writing to express strong opposition to legislation that would allow for importation of pharmaceuticals into the United States. HLC remains deeply concerned [that](#) allowing importation would undermine nearly two decades of drug safety policy and place American patients and consumers at unnecessary risk.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century health system that makes affordable, high quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC—hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, biotech firms, health product distributors, pharmacies, post-acute care providers, and information technology companies—are committed to advancing a consumer-centered healthcare system that values innovation, affordability, and accessibility.

We urge Congress to consider the following, before taking action on drug importation legislation:

- **No one can completely assure the American people that imported drugs will be safe.** The prevalence of counterfeit and improperly altered drugs is a very real global problem. The World Health Organization has estimated that 10 percent of the medications on the worldwide market are counterfeit. Americans have died as a result of these fake medicines. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) works diligently and effectively to ensure that the prescription drugs which millions rely on are safe and effective. It may seem a benign step to allow drugs from Canada to flow into the United States, but because we cannot oversee the sourcing of drugs attained by Canadian pharmacies, importation legislation would make it more difficult for the FDA and law enforcement authorities to protect consumer health.
- **Consumer savings from drug importation will be minimal, at best.** Our nation's leading healthcare distribution companies have underscored this finding by pointing out that costs for storage, inspections, relabeling, repackaging, and liability insurance would absorb virtually all potential consumer savings. There are better, safer ways to make prescription drugs more affordable for consumers.

- **Future medical breakthroughs will be undermined.** For decades, medical innovation has thrived in the free marketplace. Importing prescription drugs and, with them, the arbitrary government price controls other nations have imposed will hurt patients in the long run by undermining the revenue stream necessary for research and development of new cures and treatments. Today, Americans have healthier, longer lives, have fewer disabilities, and spend less time in the hospital because of a market environment that has encouraged investment in pharmaceutical research and development.

There are numerous policy actions that can have an impact on drug affordability without endangering the health and safety of the American people, including FDA reforms to bring generic medications to the market at a faster pace, modernization of federal fraud and abuse laws to enable pro-patient, value-focused collaboration between payers, providers, and manufacturers, and removing barriers that block the sharing of economic and efficacy data between health insurers and biopharmaceutical companies.

On behalf of HLC's members from every health sector, we agree that affordability and accessibility must continue to be health policy priorities. Opening our borders to drugs of unverifiable origin at a time of increased global medication counterfeiting is not an acceptable solution. HLC welcomes the opportunity to work with you on this issue in a way that does not compromise the safety of the drug supply chain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary R. Greal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "R".

Mary R. Greal
President