

July 1, 2016

I'm writing in my capacity as the lead organizer of RxRights.org, an American-based consumer advocacy group that's dedicated to ensuring access to safe, affordable prescription drugs and is 80,000 members strong.

We advocate for the right to personally import safe, authentic and affordable medicines from licensed, registered pharmacies outside the U.S.—a position your office has expressed support for over the years.

We're sending this letter to members of Congress who have supported personal importation. First, we'd like to thank your office for your support. Secondly, we'd like to elicit your help in answering some very important questions:

1. The two presumptive presidential candidates of the Democratic and Republican parties have demonstrated there is bipartisan support for personal importation. In light of this, how do we advance adoption of personal importation?
2. One of the major obstacles regarding prescription importation has been the requirement that the Secretary of Health and Human Services certify medication for safety. Even when we've had Secretaries who professed support for importation before their appointment, we've never been able to advance importation once they assumed office. How do we identify those responsible for certifying the health impact of regulations, decisions, and policies in their particular departments and agencies?
3. Lately, there have been many hearings highlighting the harmful impacts of recent price increases such as the spike in the costs of generic and specialty medicines. The nation's news sources have exposed the misdeeds of the likes of Martin Shkreli and Turing Pharmaceuticals as well as Valeant. Unfortunately, we have yet to see Congressional action that offers a quick and tangible solution for consumers. Enactment of legislation to allow personal importation can give struggling Americans immediate relief. How do we make the case for this immediate need?
4. And, this leads to a final set of questions:
 - a. Why do you believe efforts to legalize personal importation have not gained traction?
 - b. The control of the House and Senate has ping ponged between the two parties but both have failed to bring the issue to a vote. The most recent efforts have focused on amendment attempts in the Senate. Some of our members think this indicates there is just too much appetite for Pharma's largesse in Congress! How can we counter this cynicism?

- c. Irrespective of the cause, what action can we undertake together to advance the case for personal importation in Congress?
- d. Are there specific barriers that public action by advocacy groups, and the 4 million Americans each year for whom personal importation is a vital lifeline, can help remove?

Heather Block, a patient with Stage 4 cancer, testified before the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health in May regarding the proposed Medicare Part B Payment Demonstration Project. She spoke about the urgency of the drug pricing issue for herself and untold numbers of Americans. While Ms. Block's comments were directed towards the high costs of specialty medicines, the fact is that millions of Americans can't afford their needed medicines—and this is detrimental to their health.

Roughly 4 million Americans use personal prescription drug importation each year. Though this action has turned them into criminals, the truth is: they have no other alternative. **Americans can't continue to wait for a solution to the messy drug pricing problem; they need action now.**

Thank you for your efforts. Your office has exhibited incredible leadership on this issue. Your continued leadership and immediate action on this issue is imperative.

Finally, we would like to establish an ongoing relationship with your office related to drug pricing issues. Can you please let me know which staff member we should be communicating with about these issues?

Sincerely,

Lee J. Graczyk

Lee Graczyk
Lead Organizer, RxRights