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New Findings Show Half of Americans Surveyed Importing Drugs without a Prescription

Washington, D.C. (June 25, 2007) —Concerned about a growing number of fake and counterfeit drugs entering America, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), along with several patient and advocacy groups, today released key findings from a PhRMA-sponsored survey that reveals some common characteristics and behaviors of Americans who are importing medicines from foreign countries.

The PhRMA survey found that a significant number of American adults have recently purchased medicines from a foreign country. Half of those surveyed are buying their drugs in another country because they lack a doctor's prescription. What's more, the survey found that antibiotics and pain relief medicines are, in most cases, the typical medications American consumers seek from other countries.

"This study further confirms what the Food and Drug Administration has been saying all along – millions of Americans are circumventing the system and going to other sources to buy their medicine because they do not have a doctor's prescription for the medicine they want," said Billy Tauzin, President & CEO of PhRMA. "Alarming, this behavior increases an individual's risk to being exposed to dangerous counterfeit medicines."

Other key findings include: one in five Americans importing drugs earn more than \$100,000 annually; importers are more likely to be under the age of 35; and 85 percent of Americans importing drugs have insurance with prescription drug coverage.

PhRMA was joined by The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, the Center for Pharmacoeconomic Studies at the University of Texas College of Pharmacy and the Men's Health Network to help raise awareness of the safety issues concerning imported prescription drugs.

Commenting on the survey's findings, Sean Clarkin, Executive Vice President with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America said, "We are very concerned about the availability and use of medicines without a doctor's prescription. Internet savvy teens know it is as easy to obtain an abusable prescription drug from a rogue online pharmacy as it is to go shopping or download a song. Parents need to educate themselves about this behavior and communicate the risks to their children."

“The study disputes popular belief that Americans mainly purchase life-style drugs from foreign countries, when in fact, the majority of drugs purchased are to treat chronic ailments,” added Marv Shephard, Ph.D., Director, Center for Pharmacoeconomic Studies at the University of Texas College of Pharmacy. “What is troublesome is that many drugs are purchased without a prescription, which may mean patients are not under the care of a licensed health care provider.”

Concerned about the risks importation poses to American patients, Scott Williams, a Director with the Men’s Health Network, said, “The importation of prescription drugs exposes many Americans to the dangers and deception of counterfeit products. The risks far outweigh the supposed cost savings for American consumers.”

Tauzin concluded, “American patients deserve peace of mind that their medicines are safe and effective. Nobody should have to second-guess whether or not their medicines are real or fake. No one should have to play Russian Roulette with their health.”

More information about this survey can be found on www.phrma.org.

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) represents the country’s leading pharmaceutical research and biotechnology companies, which are devoted to inventing medicines that allow patients to live longer, healthier, and more productive lives. PhRMA companies are leading the way in the search for new cures. PhRMA members alone invested an estimated \$43 billion in 2006 in discovering and developing new medicines. Industry-wide research and investment reached a record \$55.2 billion in 2006.

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PhRMA Internet Address: <http://www.phrma.org>

For information on how innovative medicines save lives, visit: <http://www.innovation.org>

For information on the Partnership for Prescription Assistance, visit: <http://www.pparx.org>

For information on the danger of imported drugs, visit: <http://www.buysafedrugs.info>