

Open Letter to Minister Clement on Cross Border Drug Trade

January 12, 2007

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 Best Medicines Coalition, and the Canadian Association for Pharmacy Distribution Management. Together, as Canadian pharmacists, patients, and members of the supply chain, we call on the Government of Canada to institute an immediate ban on the export, both bulk and retail, of prescription drugs from Canada.

Further to our letter of November 22, 2006, to which we continue respectfully to await your reply, we asked for an immediate meeting to discuss your government's plans to protect Canada's drug supply and ensure continued access to treatments by Canadian patients. Resolution of this issue is critical in light of the expressed intent of American legislators to legalize the individual and bulk importation of lower-priced Canadian prescription drugs into the United States.

Our concerns have now been realized. Two days ago, on January 10, a bi-partisan bill advancing these objectives was introduced in both houses of the U.S. Congress. The *Pharmaceutical Market Access and Drug Safety Act of 2007* would open the floodgates to an unprecedented level of cross-border prescription drug buying, not only by individual American patients, but also through large-volume bulk purchasing by U.S. health management organizations, state drug plans, and other large entities such as high volume retail chains. Congressional leaders are predicting quick passage of this bill and suggested Wednesday that they will have sufficient support in Congress to override a presidential veto.

Our organizations believe that this American legislative proposal poses an imminent and serious threat to the security and integrity of Canada's drug supply, and hence a serious and genuine threat to the health and well-being of Canadians.

While your office has indicated publicly that Health Canada will take action if and when Canada's prescription drug supply is affected by U.S. importation, we can neither counsel nor support a reactive, after-the-fact approach to the protection of public health. We believe it is incumbent on the Government of Canada to respond proactively to this threat, with actions driven by a commitment to prevent harm and protect the public interest.

It is our firm belief that the Government of Canada can no longer stay silent on cross-border prescription drug exportation, particularly after these new developments in the U.S. Congress. We ask that you meet with us at your earliest convenience, and we offer to provide our advice and input to assist you in developing and deploying a workable plan of action to protect the Canadian public.

Yours sincerely,



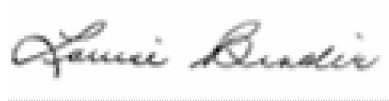
Executive Director
Canadian Pharmacists Association



CEO
Ontario Pharmacists Association



President & CEO
Canadian Association for Pharmacy
Distribution Management



Chair
Best Medicines Coalition