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Secretariat for Multidimensional Security

Model Fact Sheet

BUYING PHARMACEUTICALS CONTAINING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES OVER THE INTERNET

BUYING PHARMACEUTICALS CONTAINING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES OVER THE INTERNET

The Issue

If you buy pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances -- pain relievers like OxyContin® and Percocet®, depressants like Valium® and Xanax®, and stimulants like Ritalin® and Adderall® -- via the Internet, you may be putting your health and even your life at serious risk. This is especially true if you order these types of drugs without obtaining a valid prescription from a licensed health care professional.

The Status of Internet Pharmacy in [name of country]

[Description of legitimate internet pharmacies operating within the country and how they are regulated by the competent authority]

Risks Associated with Buying Controlled Substances Online

While some internet pharmacy sites may be licensed by [name of competent authority], many have been created to look like legitimate pharmacies and offer pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances by advertising that no prescription is needed. Some sell drugs that have not been approved for sale in [name of country]. Many offer pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances based on answers to online questionnaires that may or may not be reviewed by a physician or that are simply reviewed by a “script doctor” whose job is to write hundreds of prescriptions a day without ever seeing a patient. What they do not tell you is that it is dangerous to take

pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances without being examined in person and monitored by a health care practitioner. These measures are important in order to make sure that you get the drugs that are right for you and to reduce the risk of abuse and/or dependence.

Buying pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances from internet pharmacies that do not provide a street address and telephone number means that you have no way of knowing where these companies are located, where they get the drugs they are selling you, what is in the drugs they are selling, or how to reach them if there is a problem.

If you order from these web sites, you may get counterfeit drugs that contain the incorrect dose, wrong ingredients, dangerous additives, no active ingredients at all, or drugs that are past their expiry date, all of which could result in potentially serious health risks.

Counterfeit pharmaceuticals products may have labels with spelling mistakes, labels with no [type of drug registration number used by the competent authority] or look different, e.g., different markings on tablets, different pill colours, or even have a different taste or

flavour than the legitimate product that you are trying to purchase.

If you order pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances without being examined and monitored by a health care practitioner, you may be misdiagnosed, and miss the opportunity to get the most appropriate treatment. You may also put yourself at risk for drug interactions, or other harmful side effects that a qualified health professional could better foresee. Buying pharmaceuticals containing controlled substances on the Internet may also pose financial risks. In some cases, you may never receive the product you pay for, or if it is coming from another country, it could be stopped at the border by the *[name of customs authority]*. You might also have your personal and/or credit card information stolen.

Minimizing Your Risk

If you do decide to purchase your medication via the Internet, do not do business with a site that:

- § refuses to give a street address, telephone number and a way of contacting a pharmacist;
- § offers to issue a prescription drug based on answers to an online questionnaire;
- § sells products that have not been approved for sale in *[name of country]*; or
- § sells products that are listed as coming from other countries.

Be aware of the name of the drugs you are taking and be familiar with their usual colour, size, shape and any imprints or markings on the drug. If you suspect that you have received counterfeit drugs you should contact *[name of competent authority for health product regulation]*.

If you have questions or complaints about prescription drug products containing controlled substances that you have purchased via the Internet, please call *[name of competent authority for health products or controlled substances]*.

More Information

To learn more about the process for drug approval in *[name of country]*, visit: *[applicable website]*.

To learn more about how controlled substances are regulated in *[name of country]*, visit *[applicable website]*.