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## **Partnership for Safe Medicines Arms Public Against Counterfeit Drugs**

*Consumer protection group's new resource helps Americans cut prescription costs without compromising drug safety*

A collection of online educational materials are now available for free to consumers to help fend off the dangers of contaminated or counterfeit drugs. Unveiled today by the Partnership for Safe Medicines, "Consumer Resources" is designed to help consumers ensure the safety of their prescription drugs and includes guides on safely purchasing medicines online and how to save money without compromising drug safety.

As incidents of unscrupulous producers cutting food and medical goods with foreign, even toxic, materials become increasingly apparent across the globe, the Partnership for Safe Medicines, a coalition of organizations and individuals, is leading the effort to protect consumers from counterfeit medicines.

"Each day, innocent people unknowingly risk death or serious injury to their health by taking counterfeit drugs," said Marv D. Shepherd, Ph.D., president of the Partnership for Safe Medicines and renowned expert on drug importation and drug counterfeiting. "All across the world, we are seeing more occurrences of counterfeits involving more types of drugs in more countries. The makers of counterfeit drugs have enjoyed and profited from loopholes in our distribution system designed to deliver healthy medicines to those in need."

Available on the Partnership's Web site ([www.SafeMedicines.org](http://www.SafeMedicines.org)), "Consumer Resources" provides visitors with tips for identifying common warning signs of rogue online pharmacies, advice for recognizing when a drug is counterfeit, and counsel for making safe online drug purchases. The materials also provide practical information on how to save money on prescription drugs.

Thomas T. Kubic, president and C.E.O. of the Pharmaceutical Security Institute and Partnership board member, urged Congress and the Obama Administration to take this opportunity to further address the vulnerabilities threatening the safety of America's prescription drugs. "In today's global environment, healthcare professionals and patients must be attentive to where their pharmaceutical products are coming from. In fact, one of our members recently assessed more than 1,000 Internet sites selling medicine online and found that 97 percent did not appear to comply with state and federal laws or established patient safety and pharmacy practice standards." Kubic continued, "Nearly two-thirds of these sites offered foreign drugs, which are not

approved by the Food and Drug Administration and illegal to sell in the United States."

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 10 percent of the world's drugs are counterfeit. An important step in combating this public health threat is to educate consumers about the dangers of contraband and counterfeit drugs.

"Consumers and policymakers need to take an active role in the fight against counterfeit drugs," said Bryan A. Liang, M.D., Ph.D., J.D., vice president of the Partnership and an internationally recognized authority on the safety and vulnerability of the drug supply. "Medicines produced and sold outside of the United States aren't all regulated the same. The Partnership strongly believes that we must unify in the global fight against counterfeit drugs and send a clear message that we will not tolerate any criminal or unscrupulous activities that compromise public health."

In addition to offering free consumer resources, the Partnership developed the "Principles for Drug Safety," a set of guiding principles for building a national strategy to strengthen the U.S. distribution system and curtail the criminal counterfeit drug trade. The principles are aimed to address the urgent need for progress in the fight against counterfeit drugs, encourage policymakers to enact stronger safety measures, and enable law enforcement to deal with problems at their source. Specifically, the Partnership's principles address ways to protect the pharmaceutical supply chain, regulate online drug sellers, and fight counterfeit drugs.

To download copies of "Consumer Resources" and "Principles for Drug Safety," or to learn more about why counterfeit drugs are unsafe at any cost, visit [www.SafeMedicines.org](http://www.SafeMedicines.org).

#### About the Partnerships for Safe Medicines

The Partnership for Safe Medicines is a group of organizations and individuals that have policies, procedures, or programs to protect consumers from contraband or counterfeit medicines. To join us in our stand against counterfeit drugs or obtain a free copy of the "Principles for Drug Safety" or "Consumer Resources," please visit [www.SafeMedicines.org](http://www.SafeMedicines.org).

#### About Marvin D. Shepherd, Ph.D.

In addition to serving as the president of the Partnership, Dr. Marv Shepherd is the director of the Center for Pharmacoeconomic Studies; and chairman of the Pharmacy Administration Division at the University of Texas at Austin's College of Pharmacy. Among his many research interests, Dr. Shepherd examines the policies related to drug importation and re-importation, the use of drug anti-counterfeiting strategies, and techniques for monitoring prescription drug diversion.

#### About Bryan A. Liang, M.D., Ph.D., J.D.

Dr. Bryan A. Liang is the executive director and a professor of health law at the Institute of Health Law Studies, California Western School of Law; the co-director of the San Diego Center for Patient Safety, University of California San Diego School of Medicine; and an adjunct associate professor of Public Health, Global Emergency Preparedness and Response Program, Graduate School of Public Health at **San Diego State University**. Dr. Liang serves as the vice president for the Partnership and has published and spoken widely on the topic of safety and vulnerability of the drug supply, with more than 300 publications and presentations in domestic and international public and private forums.

#### About Thomas T. Kubic

Thomas T. Kubic is the president and chief executive officer of the Pharmaceutical Security Institute and the treasurer for the Partnership. Mr. Kubic currently serves on the World Health Organization's IMPACT Enforcement Working Group, the Interpol

Intellectual Property Crime Action Group, and in an advisory capacity to the Permanent Forum Against International Pharmaceutical Counterfeiting. Prior to joining PSI, Mr. Kubic acquired substantial national and international investigative experience during his 30-year career as a federal law enforcement executive for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.