



The Partnership for SAFEMEDICINES

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One Maine union could save over \$7 million over the next two years without sacrificing patient safety

We studied a proposal submitted to the Maine State Employees Union by a foreign drug middleman that purported to show big savings from foreign, unlicensed drug sellers selling non-FDA approved medication. We studied the top 30 medications purchased by this union and price-compared black market foreign pharmacies to pharmacies who **possessed a pharmacy license in Maine**.

After studying this sample of drugs that represent the largest expenditures to the union health plan, **we found that if the health plan purchased most of these drugs in generic form from legitimate Maine-licensed pharmacies they would save \$3.7 million per year versus saving \$2.2 million per year when buying non-FDA-approved medications on the black market.**

Buying from the black market subjects Maine patients to getting counterfeit or substandard medication that could contain insufficient ingredients or the wrong ingredients. 90% of the most prevalent medications used by Maine State employees are for chronic conditions. If they receive substandard or insufficient drugs, they won't know immediately. Most probably their doctor will say "that drug just doesn't work for you," or "sadly, your disease is progressing." Imagine their suffering when they could instead have taken legitimate medication affordably approved by the US FDA.

We always want to support Maine pharmacies and pharmacists who help build our community, and consequently should never endanger patients to save money, especially if we can keep them safe while saving even more money. See the attached spreadsheet for a breakdown by specific medication.

		Buying non-FDA approved drugs from black market, unlicensed international pharmacies	Buying products, including generics, from Maine licensed pharmacies
Price the employee union spent on these 13 drugs July 2010-June 2011		\$ 4,435,560	\$ 4,435,560
Cost of medication if this same amount were bought through each proposed program	-	\$ 2,233,382	\$ 759,473
Total Savings (for 1 year)		\$ 2,202,178	\$ 3,676,088
Total Savings (for 2 years)	x2	\$ 4,404,357	\$ 7,352,175