

January 21, 2020

Senate Commerce Committee
NH State Senate
107 N. Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Chairman Cavanaugh and Members of the Committee:

I am John Adams from Canada. With my name, I have always been interested in New England. Thank you for receiving my testimony today on SB685, a bill to create wholesale drug importation from Canada.

Let me share with you the perspective of Canadian patients. I am here because I volunteer as chair of the Best Medicines Coalition, which is a non-profit, with 28 patient organizations as members. Together we represent millions of Canadian patients. Our mission is to help ensure that Canadians have timely access to medicines that are safe and effective.

Even though we're your neighbour, friend and ally, it's safe to say most of us do not think kindly of proposals to import from Canada bulk quantities of medicines intended for Canadians.

I travelled from Toronto to Concord to voice our concerns with the bill before your committee. This is only my second time in Concord or New Hampshire – the first time was on a honeymoon through New England.

Canadians appreciate America's bold sense of confidence and pride in self-reliance and problem-solving. That's why it is disorienting to witness politicians from both of your parties looking to my country to help make your medicines more affordable. We would love to help. We can help with ideas and experiences. But we cannot help with supply. Please let me explain.

There are three reasons why we are unable to help with supply: first, there are not enough of us compared to your population; second, we have drug shortages already and, third, Canada does relatively little manufacturing of prescription drugs.

For many Canadians, this is a matter of personal importance, but it starts with arithmetic. Our nation of 38 million people does not have the pharmaceutical supply for your 329 million citizens. That is a ratio of one to nine. These numbers don't work.

Regarding drug shortages, according to our regulator, which is called Health Canada, there are as many as [2,000 medications in short or no supply](#). In round numbers, that is 2,000 out of 13,000 approved medicines.

Thirdly, only a minority of medicines are made in Canada and virtually none of the active pharmaceutical ingredients are made in Canada. We don't control this manufacturing; we cannot increase supply.

As a hypothetical, we could give you all of the medicines we do get and what would happen to us? We patients would suffer and many of us would die prematurely. If we did that - and why would we - there would still be no benefit for eight of your nine constituents.

Canadians are known for our generosity and affection for our American neighbours. If it were within our wherewithal to share our prescription drug supply with you, we would certainly do so. We do try to help others.

Sometimes it takes a good friend to say you are dealing with a bad idea.

The truth is that Canada and Canadians are not responsible for US drug prices. Concerns with made-in-America drug prices need made-in-America solutions.

Sincerely,

John Adams

Board Chair, Best Medicines Coalition

Toronto, Canada