

Launch of **Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP) Global India Chapter**

**to Protect Indian Consumers
from Unsafe Medicine**

**Banaras Hindu University,
Varanasi, India**

Thursday, 9th August, 2018



at the

**1st Regional Quality Conclave on
UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE through
Ayushman Bharat: Assisting Implementation**

Partnership for
SAFE MEDICINES INDIA
www.safemedicinesindia.in



EDUCATE

INFLUENCE

RESEARCH

COLLABORATE

INTRODUCTION

The Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP Global) launches a local chapter in India to protect Indian consumers from the illegal online sale of medical products. The ASOP Global India Chapter joins ASOP Global's community in the United States, Europe, China, Canada, and other regions to address illegal online sellers and protect consumers/patients from the sale of spurious, not of quality standards, falsified and unapproved medicines. The ASOP Global India Chapter will promote and protect patients in India from unsafe medicines sold via the internet and available in the global supply chain. The mission of the India Chapter is to engage with the government, patient/consumer organizations, industry associations and other stakeholders to increase public awareness and to address the threat from sale of spurious, substandard and falsified pharmaceutical products from online pharmacies in India and globally. The India Chapter also will share the global best practices with the India Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and empower consumers to differentiate between Safe Online Pharmacies and illegal online drug sellers that compromise the quality and safety of medicines and reduce consumer confidence.

The online sale of these unsafe medicines is a global issue that poses a significant risk to the health and safety of Indian consumers. With just a few clicks, Indian consumers are at risk of purchasing medicines that contain too much, too little, or no medicine at all from illegal online pharmacies.

The Government of India will soon complete and release new legislation and regulations covering the registration and sales of drugs by on-line and off-line pharmacies. The ASOP Global India Chapter is working closely with the the India Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) concerning this new legislation and will offer assistance in the implementation of the new legislation and regulations. An ASOP Global delegation to India is being planned this year for additional collaboration with Government of India officials, patient/consumer organizations, industry associations and other stakeholders.



International Forum on Patient Safety and Access to Safe Online Pharmacies, New Delhi, India • 1-2 March, 2017

About ASOP Global – Purpose of the India Office

- ▶ ASOP Global establishes an India office to promote effective communication and coordination with Gol and India stakeholders
- ▶ ASOP Global organized a March 2017 India Forum titled "Patient Safety and Access to Safe Online Pharmacies" working with India partners and Gol
- ▶ The Gol is working on proposed new regulations on safe online pharmacies amending the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to include prescription drugs
- ▶ Currently only over-the-counter drugs may be legally sold online in India
- ▶ ASOP Global's India office will work with Gol and India stakeholders so India's new regulations will have adequate safeguards for India patients
- ▶ An India section will be added to the ASOP Global website
- ▶ A major focus of the ASOP Global India office will be public awareness and patient, pharmacist and physician education on safe online pharmacy best practices
- ▶ ASOP Global's India office will also coordinate with the WHO India and SEARO offices, patient organizations and industry representatives

BACKGROUND

- While the Internet has provided immeasurable societal benefits, it has also exposed global consumers to the hazards of illegal online pharmacies peddling "medicines" that may be counterfeit, adulterated, misbranded, and/or unapproved. The following statistics evidence the scope of the global problem:
 - At any one time there are 35,000 - 45,000 active online pharmacies (LegitScript);
 - 96% of websites offering to sell drugs are illegitimate and operating in violation of applicable U.S. laws and pharmacy practice standards (National Association of Boards of Pharmacy);
 - The Internet is the world's largest marketplace for counterfeit drugs as 50% of the prescription medicines sold online by websites that hide their physical address are counterfeit (World Health Organization);
 - Every month, approximately six hundred new illegal online pharmacy sites go live (LegitScript);
 - 33% of surveyed consumers have previously purchased prescription medications from an online pharmacy website for themselves or someone under their care, and 55% have or would consider buying medicine online. (ASOP Global);
 - Of the prescription medications being purchased online, nearly 60% are chronic illness and/or maintenance drugs for diseases such as HIV/ AIDS, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, etc. (LegitScript);
 - In a two week period there were over 45,000 tweets that promoted the purchase and non-medical use of prescription drugs through an actively marketed illegal online pharmacy (Timothy Mackey, University of California San Diego); and
 - Nearly 91% of first-page search results led users to an illegal online pharmacy selling controlled substances such as prescription opioids, often without a valid prescription (National Association of Boards of Pharmacy).



2018 STRATEGIC PLAN: US, EUROPE, CANADA, LATIN AMERICA, CHINA, INDIA

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

- Educate government officials and policymakers in target countries: Canada, India, China, Mexico, Brazil, US, Europe.
- Educate patients and healthcare providers through local and national media and strategic partnerships.
- Garner 10+ new thought-leaders as allies and spokespeople on the issue; engage them in media opportunities.
- Run Google AdWords campaigns in five European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and UK).
- Conduct focused healthcare provider trainings in Indiana, California and Minnesota.
- Collaborate with Cigna to train their network of employers and healthcare providers on the issue.
- Present the ASOP Global Patient Safety Champion to Members of Congress and other allies (October).
- Present the Internet Pharmacy Safety E-Commerce Award to domain name registries/registrar at ICANN63 in Barcelona, Spain (October 20-26, 2018).
- Publish ASOP Global Newsletter; provide monthly FAKESHARE updates to stakeholders in Portugal, Spain & UK.
- Speak at 20-30 conferences and events worldwide to raise awareness and engage allies.
- Educate the next generation of Internet leaders through the Youth Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Program run by the Internet Society and Partners.

RESEARCH

- Support and publicize outcomes from at least four (4) forthcoming ASOP Global-sponsored studies: antibiotics test buys; antivirals test buys; and Canadian behavior and perception.
- Host an ASOP Global/Foundation-sponsored research symposium on new research and data in Summer 2018.
- Work with EU stakeholders regarding awareness of the Falsified Medicines Directive Common Logo.
- Outreach to other academics to encourage additional research.
- Seek grants for Google/Bing AdWords campaigns and for research via the ASOP Global Foundation.

INFLUENCE

- Urge governments to call for voluntary action by internet companies, marketplaces and social media platforms
- Garner online pharmacy patient safety champions on Capitol Hill and throughout the Administration.

About ASOP Global

ASOP Global is nonprofit organization, based in Washington, DC, working in the US, Europe, Canada, India, Latin America and Asia to make the internet safer for patients through:



Educate

Provide consumers, providers and policymakers about how to stay safe when shopping for medicine online.

Influence

Influence policy with policymakers, internet commerce companies, law enforcement and NGOs.



Research

Development of credible data and information on internet pharmacies, trends and illicit online drug sellers.

Collaborate

Work alongside US and international partners to raise awareness and improve patient safety online.



- Advocate for policies that help governments and law enforcement address illegal online drug sellers.
- Hold ASOP Canada's first Hill Day in Ottawa.
- Advocate for action by search engines to clean up page 1 search results/ promote legitimate sites.
- Seek support from Mexico and Brazil officials to clean up online marketplaces and social media platforms.
- Support ASOP EU and EU Member States on implementation of the Falsified Medicines Directive.
- Engage with the Government of India and Indian allies on the implementation of e-pharmacy regulations.
- Conduct follow-up with Chinese government officials and internet companies; anticipate 2019 US-China event.
- Engage in ICANN-related policy issues such as GDPR, RAA compliance, privacy/proxy or release of new gTLDs.
- Participate in the Committee of Parties, once established, following ratification of the MEDICRIME Convention.

COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with other NGOs and allies on policy, outreach, and strategic communications.
- Partner with RESOLVE to educate fertility clinics and providers.
- Participate in APEC Centers of Excellence programs.
- Conduct webinars and events with ASOP Global members' and allies to educate and share best practices.
- Continue to expand ASOP Global membership.

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B 306, First Floor, C R Park, New Delhi 110019, INDIA

Phone: +91-11-26271416 • Mobile: +91-9811044424 • www.safemedicinesindia.in

24 x 7 Toll Free Helpline Number 1800-11-4424

Offices in India: **Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Patna, Jamshedpur, Lucknow and Varanasi.**