

Canadian Consulate General



Consulat Général du Canada

Three Copley Place, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02116

February 28, 2024

Committee on Health and Human Services
House of Representatives
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing today with regard to 2024-H 7444, *An Act Relating to Food and Drugs - Wholesale Prescription Drug Importation Program*.

The problem of high costs and access to prescription drugs is one that Canadians certainly understand. Like you, we have seen drug prices in Canada rise to become the third highest among Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries – about 25% above the OECD median.

As you and your colleagues examine the different policy options to lower the cost of prescription drugs for the people of Rhode Island, I would ask that you take into consideration the limitations of the Canadian drug market. Put simply, we are too small to support demand from the U.S. To put this in perspective, the U.S. consumes 44% of the global prescription drug supply compared to Canada's 2%. Additionally, Canada imports 68% of our prescription drugs in their final dosage form.

As a government, our priority is to ensure that Canadians have reliable and steady access to a safe, effective, and affordable drug supply. That is why Health Canada issued regulations in August 2021 prohibiting the export of drugs intended for the Canadian market if doing so could cause or exacerbate a shortage in Canada.¹ This order applies to all drugs subject to mandatory shortage reporting requirements in Canada and includes all drugs that are eligible for U.S. bulk importation and additional categories, such as biologics and controlled substances.

Canada greatly values the longstanding cultural, economic, and familial ties it shares with Rhode Island and the Government of Canada remains dedicated to working with the State of Rhode Island to improve our respective citizens' health and well-being. We would be happy to connect your committee members to relevant officials in Canada who can share how we are working to address high drug prices.

Please let me know of any questions you might have regarding Canada's policies and know that I look forward to remaining engaged with Rhode Island lawmakers on this important issue.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan
Consul General of Canada to New England

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BJ', written over a horizontal line.

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/compliance-enforcement/establishment-licences/notice-amending-regulations-drugs-medical-devices-shortages.html>