January 9, 2017

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA), I am writing to you in advance of the Senate’s consideration of the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Reconciliation Act to express our firm opposition to the importation of pharmaceuticals sold or designated for sale in foreign countries. HDA urges you to vote against any form of amendment that would allow for the importation of these medicines, as it could endanger the safety of the domestic pharmaceutical supply chain and would be counter to the work Congress has done to secure our nation’s drug supply and protect patients.

HDA is the national association representing primary healthcare distributors, the vital link between the nation’s pharmaceutical manufacturers and healthcare providers. Each business day, HDA member companies ensure that over 15 million prescription medicines and healthcare products are delivered safely and efficiently to more than 200,000 pharmacies, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics and physicians’ offices nationwide.

The U.S. pharmaceutical supply chain is a sophisticated, efficient, and highly secure system, and was further strengthened in 2013 by the passage of the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA, or Title II of the Drug Quality and Security Act). The Act provides for a federal traceability solution for all prescription medicines, which by 2023, will lead to the establishment of FDA-regulated, electronic, unit-level traceability requirements across the entire supply chain. Drugs sold or designated for sale in other countries will likely not conform with U.S. traceability regulations, thereby exposing the U.S. supply chain and patients to substandard products and unnecessary risks.

Allowing importation, even from a specific country, increases the likelihood of counterfeit or adulterated drugs entering the country and may not result in meaningful reductions in the cost of prescription drugs. Before considering importation of potentially dangerous products from other countries — whether through personal or commercial importation, or Internet purchasing — Congress and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration should consider the implications of introducing such risk to the pharmaceutical supply chain.

We urge you to oppose any amendment to the 2017 Budget Reconciliation Act that would allow for the importation of drugs designated for foreign markets.

Sincerely,

John M. Gray
President and CEO