



The Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness

Chairman Dan Burton (R ~ IN)



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CHAIRMAN BURTON CRITICIZES LATEST DRUG INDUSTRY INSULT TO CONSUMER INTERESTS

- PFIZER THREATENS TO CUT OFF CANADIAN DRUG IMPORTS -

Washington, D.C. – In the most recent move aimed at protecting their profit margins, Pfizer has joined GlaxoSmithKline (Glaxo), Astra Zeneca and Wyeth by initiating actions to cut off the sale of pharmaceuticals to Canadian wholesalers that export to the United States. Pfizer recently confirmed that they have sent letters to 50 Canadian pharmacies warning that they will cut off or scale back shipments of prescription drugs to the Canadian companies they believe are selling to American consumers.

“The recent actions taken by Pfizer are further proof that they put profits above everything else, even the needs of American consumers,” stated Chairman Burton. “As a fiscal conservative, who strongly believes in open markets and the free enterprise system, I do not think that ‘profit’ is a dirty word. But I do think there is something very wrong with the pharmaceutical industry disproportionately loading the bulk of their profits on the backs of the American people.”

On July 25, 2003, Chairman Burton and his colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives responded to seniors’ pleas for relief from high priced prescription drugs by overwhelmingly passing “*The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act*” (H.R. 2427). “*The Pharmaceutical Market Access Act*,” a tri-partisan bill with broad-based support, is designed to allow American consumers the right to purchase affordable, FDA-approved prescription drugs from FDA-approved facilities in Canada and other industrialized nations. Despite an intense lobbying effort by the pharmaceutical industry, the bill passed by a convincing 243-186 margin.

The steps taken by Pfizer are similar to those of their counterparts GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and Wyeth. For its part, Glaxo, under the auspices of renewed “safety concerns,” led the way, by refusing to ship its products to Canadian wholesalers and pharmacies that sell to American patients as of January, 2003. Despite clinging to claims of the dangers of counterfeit and misbranded drugs, the pharmaceutical industry and the FDA have been **unable** to cite a **single incident** of adverse health reactions caused by Canadian imported FDA-approved prescription drugs during a series of Congressional hearings Chaired by Congressman Burton.

Concluded Chairman Burton, “It is time for the pharmaceutical industry to wake-up and realize that American consumers will no longer stand for paying outrageous prices for the same pharmaceutical products that are being sold in Canada and Europe for one-sixth or one-seventh of the price. Americans should pay fair and competitive prices for their prescription drugs, but no more. We must all work together to bring fair pricing to the world-wide prescription drug market.”