

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 2, 2012

Michele Marie Leonhart
Administrator,
Drug Enforcement Administration
Lincoln Place-East
700 Army Navy Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Administrator Leonhart,

We write to request clarification, guidance, and collaboration regarding the DEA's efforts to confront the prescription drug abuse epidemic that our nation faces. We understand the important role that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has in enforcing the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) and look forward to hearing more about your efforts in this regard.

Over the last few months, pharmacies across the country have identified a disturbing trend that is threatening the ability of legitimate patients from getting needed, lifesaving prescription drugs. Specifically, many small pharmacy owners have had difficulties in obtaining certain controlled substances because the supply from wholesalers has been severely limited or shut off. In some cases, pharmacies located near hospitals, pain clinics or facilities that serve cancer patients, have had difficulties in adequately serving the prescription drug needs of their high-risk, high-need patients. This is especially concerning considering that many of these small pharmacies serve patients in areas where an alternative source for the medications is limited or nonexistent.

We agree that all sectors of the prescription drug supply chain should be rigorously scrutinized and that violators of the law are appropriately punished. However, it is critical for the DEA to ensure consistent application of all laws and guidelines to wholesalers, pharmacies, and other providers. We are concerned that inconsistent interpretation and application of DEA policies, and a lack of clear guidance and communication from DEA to supply chain stakeholders, are leading to patient care issues and supply chain disruption. We are interested in better understanding how these policies are being communicated and whether DEA is monitoring their application. Hopefully we can agree that better communication between DEA and legitimate entities in the supply chain will ensure that these stakeholders understand and perform their legal and ethical responsibilities and will result in less prescription drug abuse.

Let us reiterate that we strongly support the DEA's efforts to crack down on the abuse of prescription drugs. It is in everyone's best interest, from a large multi-national corporation to an independent pharmacy, that the criminals who are contributing to the problem are identified, removed from their position, and fully punished in accordance with the law. However, without clear regulatory guidance, consistent application of laws governing the supply of prescription drugs, and comprehensive collaboration between the DEA and all stakeholders, the lives and well-being of patients could be threatened. We thank you for your dedicated service and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Peter Welch

D. Coe

Joe Long

Howard Cole

Bill B. Pugh

Mike V. Anderson

Marsha Blackburn

Lou Barletta

D. G. Ross

~~AMMM~~

Pat O'Neil
