



**Vote yes on Senate Bill 19-5 “Import Prescription Drugs from Canada” by
Senators Rodriguez and Ginal and Representative Jaquez Lewis**

Many older adults are forced to choose between filling an RX or buying groceries or paying their utility bills. At AARP, we are calling on policymakers to stop RX greed and cut prices now.

SB 19-5 requires the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to design a wholesale importation program for prescription pharmaceutical products from Canada and, subject to federal approval, to implement this program, making wholesale imported prescription pharmaceutical products from Canada available to Colorado consumers by 2022.

Who benefits under the bill:

- Consumers covered by private insurance and those without insurance will both benefit as the state’s accumulated savings are directly passed on to help bring down the cost of drugs for all.
- The savings to the state would vary from drug to drug. For example, as reported in the Colorado Sun, a dose of Lyrica, a common treatment for nerve damage, costs \$6.04 on average in the U.S. and just \$0.63 in Canada; a tablet of Tracleer, used to treat pulmonary artery hypertension, costs \$173.09 in the U.S. and \$47.18 in Canada; and Harvoni, a Hepatitis C treatment, costs \$1,090.35 in the U.S. and \$797.62 across the border.
- According to Kaiser Health News, a month's supply of insulin pens in USD was: \$700 US, 65 CAN. This translates to \$8,400 in out of pocket cost in the US per year versus \$780 from Canada or Mexico.

Is importation safe:

- Nobody wants unsafe drugs. That’s why SB 19-5 includes a strong role for FDA.

- The pharmaceutical market is already global. According to FDA, the US imports more than 40% of its finished products and 80% of its active pharmaceutical ingredients.
- There are 480 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies registered and operating in Canada. Included are all the large companies incorporated in the US.
- Both the US and Canada develop and manufacture drugs and biologics under the ICH (International Conference on Harmonisation) and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards which are accepted and inspected by global health regulatory authorities. Adherence to these standards is most effective and financially efficient means to have new products registered as quickly as possible around the world.
- The majority of the US FDA fast-tracked approvals are jointly reviewed between the US and Canada
- Canada and the US each have drug supply security laws to prevent tampering with all medications and their individual components.
- The US-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council, formed in 2011, recognizes each country's systems and science-based work. What is safe for the Canadian market, is also safe for the US consumer.

For more information contact:

Kelli Fritts

Associate State Director, AARP Colorado

(303)764-5991

Kfritts@aarp.org