

Eighty Percent of U.S. Adults Favor Allowing Importation of Prescription Drugs, According to Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll

Many feel banning of drug importation is intended to protect pharmaceutical company profits

According to a recent Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll, four out of five (80%) U.S. adults indicate that they favor allowing people to import prescription drugs from Canada and other countries if they are much less expensive. A vast majority (84%) of the public strongly or somewhat agrees that the law banning pharmaceutical imports is intended to protect drug companies' profits, while only thirty-six percent say this law helps protect Americans from potentially harmful drugs.

These are some of the results of an online survey of 2,295 U.S. adults conducted by Harris Interactive between August 23 and 25, 2006 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition (www.wsj.com/health).

While some pharmaceutical companies want to make it impossible for Canadian pharmacies to sell drugs over the Internet, a majority of adults (72%) state that this policy is very or somewhat unreasonable. Additionally, 83 percent agree that it should be legal to import drugs from Canada that are approved and vetted by Health Canada, Canada's equivalent of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Since last year, Customs has been confiscating packages mailed to U.S. consumers by Canadian pharmacies, with 37,154 packages seized as of July 2006. A majority (77%) agrees that confiscating drugs at the Canadian border jeopardizes the health of some Americans, and very few (6%) feel that those who regularly order pharmaceuticals from Canada should be fined or arrested.

Interestingly, only one out of ten (11%) adults say they have bought prescription drugs from a pharmacy in Canada or another foreign country (either by going there, on the Internet, or by mail) in order to save money, but that percentage has doubled since 2002. Adults living in the West (16%) are more likely to indicate that they have bought prescription drugs from a pharmacy in Canada or another foreign country, as compared those living in the South (11%), East (8%) or Midwest (8%). Hispanics (23%) are more likely to say they have purchased prescription drugs from a pharmacy in another country, as compared to Whites (11%) and Blacks (2%).

Health-Care Poll

TABLE 1

Most Urgent Health Care Issue

“Which one of the following do you think is the most urgent health care issue which needs to be addressed in the next four years?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Total	
	2004	2006
	%	%
Reducing the number of people without health insurance	39	44
Reducing the cost of prescription drugs	39	36
Improving the quality of medical care	17	13
Not sure	5	7

TABLE 2

Favor/Oppose Allowing Importation of Less Expensive Drugs

“Do you favor or oppose allowing people to import prescription drugs from Canada and other countries if they are much less expensive there?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Total	
	2004	2006
	%	%
Favor	84	80
Oppose	7	7
Not sure	10	14

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 3A

Ever Bought Drugs from Another Country

“Have you ever bought prescription drugs from a pharmacy in Canada or another foreign country – by going there, on the Internet, or by mail – to save money?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Total
	%
Have bought	
November 2002	5
September 2003	7
August 2006	11

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TABLE 3B

Ever Bought Drugs from Another Country – by Region and Race

“Have you ever bought prescription drugs from a pharmacy in Canada or another foreign country – by going there, on the Internet, or by mail – to save money?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Yes	No
	%	%
Total	11	89
By Region:		
East	8	92
Midwest	8	92
South	11	89
West	16	84
By Race/Ethnicity:		
White	11	89
Black	2	98
Hispanic	23	77

TABLE 4

Prohibiting Canadian Pharmacies from Selling Drugs to Americans

“Some pharmaceutical companies want to make it impossible for Canadian pharmacies to sell drugs over the Internet so that Americans will have to buy all their drugs at higher U.S. prices. Do you think this policy of pharmaceutical companies...?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	2003	2006
	%	%
Reasonable (NET)	16	19
Very reasonable	7	8
Somewhat reasonable	8	11
Unreasonable (NET)	77	72
Somewhat unreasonable	22	20
Very unreasonable	55	51
Not sure	7	9

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

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TABLE 5

Perceptions About the Prohibition on Prescription Drug Importation

“Since last year Customs has been systematically confiscating packages mailed to U.S. consumers by Canadian pharmacies. The number of seized packages had reached 37,154 by July of this year. How do you feel about the following statements?”

Base: All U.S. Adults

	Strongly/ Some- what Agree (NET)	Strongly Agree	Some- what Agree	Strongly/ Some- what Disagree (NET)	Some- what Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Those who regularly order pharmaceuticals from Canada should be fined /arrested.	6	1	5	88	15	73	6
The law banning pharmaceutical imports from Canada and other countries helps protect Americans from potentially harmful drugs.	36	9	27	57	26	30	7
The law banning pharmaceutical imports from Canada and other countries is intended to protect drug companies' profits.	84	65	18	9	5	4	8
Confiscating drugs at the Canadian border jeopardizes the health of some Americans.	77	48	29	15	8	6	8
It should be legal to import drugs from Canada that are approved and vetted by Health Canada, Canada's equivalent of the FDA.	83	65	19	9	4	5	7

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Health-Care Poll

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between August 23 and 25, 2006 among a national cross section of 2,295 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, nonresponse (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

With pure probability samples, with 100 percent response rates, it is possible to calculate the probability that the sampling error (but not other sources of error) is not greater than some number. With pure probability samples of 2,295 adults, one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the results have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; www.dowjones.com), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers that are at the top of their industries, with 766,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q2, 2006.

The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of nearly 1,900 business and financial news staff—the largest network of business and financial journalists in the world. The Online Journal also features exclusive content, including interactive graphics on business and world news, and online-only columns about the automotive industry, technology, personal finance and more.

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timely information on events and trends important to the legal market. Subscribers to all also get access to the full content of the Online Journal.

In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year. In 2004, the Online Journal received an Eppy Award for Best Internet Business Service over 1 million monthly visitors. The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, StartupJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is the 12th largest and fastest-growing market research firm in the world. The company provides research-driven insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what could conceivably be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its United States, Europe and Asia offices, its wholly-owned subsidiary Novartis in France and through a global network of independent market research firms. The service bureau, HISB, provides its market research industry clients with mixed-mode data collection, panel development services as well as syndicated and tracking research consultation. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at www.harrisinteractive.com.

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