HealthPolCom Case Study

Importing Medicines: Explaining Safety and Quality Concerns

Situation: The pharmaceutical industry's trade association needed help providing its members and allies information and documents to respond to legislative proposals that would have dramatically expanded the ability of individuals to import medicines.

Actions: Researched and wrote white papers, talking points and related materials that explained to various stakeholder groups:

- The differences between so-called "re-importation" and importation;
- The safety risks to individuals importing medicines without adequate regulatory supervision;
- How buying imported medicines disrupts a patient's team of healthcare; professionals, and how this can endanger the quality of care for patients with chronic medical problems (who frequently take multiple medications) since it would be very unlikely that foreign pharmacists would consult with local clinicians; and
- The fact that in 1988 Congress created the law restricting importation of medicines because of documented problems with imported counterfeit birth control pills.

Outcome: Industry representatives used these documents to clearly and simply explain the safety and quality of care concerns related to importing medicines.