

Canadian prescription wars continue

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An increasing number of prescription drugs ordered by U.S. citizens from Canadian sources are being seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

The increased seizures of the medications ordered by tens of thousands of U.S. citizens results from a government policy change ordered last November, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday.

In the past, federal agents Customs and U.S. Food and Drug ignored small mail orders of medications being delivered in the United States from Canada, where prescription prices are in some cases just a fraction of those charged in the United States.

That abruptly changed in November when Customs began systematically confiscating packages mailed to U.S. consumers by Canadian pharmacies, the Journal reported. The number of seized packages has reached more than 37,000 and some members of Congress told the newspaper they are being deluged by complaints from constituents.

The Bush administration and Republican congressional leaders have generally supported the pharmaceutical industry's opposition to Canadian imports.

The United States is one of the few nations in which the government doesn't control drug prices, the Journal said, noting pharmaceutical companies earn the bulk of their profits in the United States.

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