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Risks for Employers Using Drug Import Companies to Manage Costs

Kathy Lawler, Susan Huntington and Erin Healy wrote an article, "Risks for Employers using Drug Import Companies to Manage Costs," for *AHLA Weekly*. The article discusses the use of so-called "prescription referral services" to facilitate purchases of prescription medications from outside the United States in order to control costs for individuals and health care plan sponsors. It provides an analysis of the risks that arise for self-insured employers that direct their employees toward these channels. The article states that while current Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations prohibit the practice even for personal use, the FDA has taken a non-enforcement position with regard to individual buyers. "Self-insured employers should note that the FDA's present inaction provides no guarantee that the FDA won't seek, in the future, to hold accountable plan sponsors that facilitate the importation of foreign drug products," the article states, "particularly in situations where a plan sponsor benefits financially from encouraging plan beneficiaries to purchase drugs from foreign, non-FDA-approved sources."