New Customs Rules for International Prescription Sourcing

A federal customs rule taking effect October 22 makes prescriptions mailed from outside the U.S. materially harder to import. We want to make sure it is on your radar.

What Has Changed

$800
Duty-Free Exemption Suspended

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has indefinitely suspended the $800 duty-free exemption for international mail.

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July
New Postal Entry Process

In July, CBP implemented a new postal entry process that requires a bond, a licensed filer, and tariff classification.

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Oct 22
Formal Entry Required

Starting October 22, FDA-regulated shipments, including prescription drugs, can no longer use the simplified postal process and must use formal entry or a new electronic alternative.

Why This Matters

In recent years, international procurement has been promoted in the marketplace as a viable way to lower prescription drug costs. Bim Group has consistently taken the position, informed by guidance from our ERISA counsel, that importing prescription drugs is not permitted under FDA rules, except in limited circumstances, and most employer sourcing programs do not fit those exceptions. That is not how many of these programs have been marketed.

The new customs requirements do not change FDA law, but they remove much of the practical pathway these programs have relied on and give CBP and the FDA far more visibility into these shipments.

> **Key insight:** If your plan sources any prescriptions internationally, this can mean delayed or refused refills, prescriptions returning to your domestic plan at U.S. pricing, and savings guarantees that may not hold.