

How Does a State Implement a Drug Importation Program?

The state sets up and administers a wholesale drug importation program.

The state contracts with only fully-licensed and regulated suppliers in Canada.

The supplier must comply with Canadian laws and import only drugs that Canada regulates.

The state licenses a wholesaler to handle drug importation and distribution.

The wholesaler must operate in compliance with the state guidelines.

The wholesaler imports the drugs and distributes them only to state-licensed retail pharmacies.

The state or its contractor ensures drug safety and quality.

Drugs from Canada would be routinely tested for purity and potency.

The state does not provide free samples, pharmacies and other dispensing entities order and pay for drugs as they currently do.

Drugs imported from Canada are never shipped or dispensed out-of-state.

What federal approvals are needed for a state to initiate an importation program?

The state must prove that:

- The drugs will be tested regularly for safety and purity;
- The program does not put consumers at greater health risk than they are under in the current drug supply system; and
- The program will yield significant savings to the state's consumers.

What state legislation is needed?

State lawmakers must approve importation legislation that meets all federal requirements.

To review state model legislation to establish a drug importation program, click [here](#).

For a copy of a legislator's guide and additional background materials about state drug importation legislation, contact Jane Horvath at jhorvath@nashp.org.

