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## Vermont News

### **Vermont First to Pass Major Drug Import Legislation**

In May Vermont became the first state to sign legislation allowing the import of prescription drugs from Canada. The law, if approved, would allow wholesalers in Vermont to import drugs directly from wholesalers in Canada at a lower cost, than currently available.

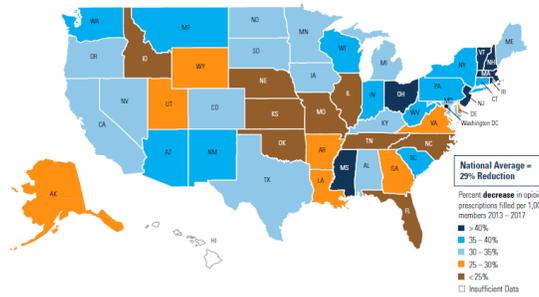
The legislation was designed by the National Academy for State Health Policy and similar legislation is currently proposed in eight other states. The major difference between this law and what some other states already allow is that this one is designed to import from and to wholesalers rather than individuals, so as to preserve the integrity and safety of the supply chain.

The law would have to be certified by the United States Department Health and Human Services, a move not likely to happen as the current secretary, Alex Azar, has gone on record against the measure. Drug companies and their lobbying groups have also come out against the measure

For more info and original story check out this article in [The Hill](#)

States that show the greatest reductions in overall opioid prescribing rates include Massachusetts (51 percent), Rhode Island (46 percent), Mississippi (43 percent), Vermont (41 percent), New Hampshire (41 percent) and New Jersey (41 percent).]

EXHIBIT 3: OPIOID PRESCRIPTION FILL RATE DECLINE BY STATE (2013 TO 2017)



## Report By BCBS Says Reduction in Opioid Prescriptions in Vermont

According to a [report](#) released by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS), there has been a forty-one percent decrease in opioid prescriptions for Vermonters insured by the company. This reduction is much higher than the national one of twenty-nine percent.

While still above the nation average opioid use disorder rate, Vermonters, have had some of the largest decreases in opioid prescriptions, as measured between the years 2013 to 2017.

Vermont is currently ranked 23rd in opioid use disorder rate at 7.9 (per 1000 Blue Cross Blue Shield members), above the national average of 5.9( per 1000 BCBS Members). This current trend, if it can be applied to the general population, could be evidence that state, local and national efforts to reduce opioid misuse may be having the intended effect.

For more information, read [this article](#) in VermontBiz Magazine.

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## National News

### Study Supports Expanding Technician Roles

In July, The University of Pittsburg School of Pharmacy published a meta study designed to aggregate evidence that would support expanding the roles of pharmacy technicians. The review covered twenty-four studies published between 2000 and 2017 and found evidence to support expansion of technician roles in several key areas that could translate to a reallocation of

time, allowing the pharmacist to focus more on more clinical aspects of the job.

Among the areas examined was the utilization of technicians for final product verification, with studies showing technicians with accuracy rates over 99% when utilizing current bar code scanning technology. Studies in which technicians were involved were medication therapy management (MTM), transferring prescriptions, and administering vaccinations.

Also evidenced were the current areas that technicians already assist the pharmacist with, such as collecting information for the electronic health record, identifying problems with prescriptions, identifying patients with MTM issues or in need of adherence to therapy instructions, or identifying patients in need of immunization. This work already leads to a greater amount of time for pharmacists to develop care plans and interact with patients.

The paper also examined technicians' aspiration for expanding roles and how these roles could lead to greater job satisfaction.

For more information, check out the [study](#).



## Teva to Make New Generic EpiPen

The FDA approved the first new generic equivalent in twenty years for EpiPen. Teva will make the new generic version. When Mylan, the current manufacturer, bought the rights to sell EpiPen in 2007, the price per pen was around \$57. There have been many complaints when Mylan raised the price to around \$300 per pen. This along with the problems with shortages reported all summer prompted the FDA, with the aim of lowering costs, to pledge to help generic versions of the complex drug-device get to market. More than 400 patients in 45 states reporting difficulties in getting the product this summer. While there are other epinephrine injectors, this will be the first one that is a

generic equivalent to EpiPen.

**Read more [here](#).**

## Contact

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