

New in Health Affairs Forefront: 'Myths of Mandatory International Reference Pricing for Prescription Drugs'

A new article from the National Pharmaceutical Council includes evidence to dispel common myths about mandatory international reference pricing.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new [Health Affairs Forefront article](#) from the National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC) includes evidence to dispel common myths about mandatory international reference pricing (IRP). Here are four key takeaways:

- Reference countries are NOT comparable to the U.S.
- Mandatory IRP WON'T help seniors and people with disabilities.
- Prescription drug costs are NOT the primary driver of higher U.S. healthcare spending relative to other countries.
- Mandatory IRP CAN'T reduce U.S. drug costs without harming patients and pharmaceutical innovation.

The Bottom Line: "Mandatory IRP is a bad idea because it rests on assumptions that are unsupported by evidence and because current proposals will not reduce drug costs for most patients. [Following through](#) on PBM reforms and addressing the unrestrained growth of the 340B program are more promising routes to patient affordability."

Why It Matters: Mandatory IRP is a bad idea with bipartisan support.

- CMS proposed mandatory international reference pricing policies through the GLOBE and GUARD models are currently under review at OMB. These models would effectively set the cost of certain drugs in Medicare Parts B and D to the lowest price among 19 reference countries.
- On the Democratic side, the Request for Information issued by the Senate Finance Committee Minority Staff solicits feedback on how to incorporate mandatory IRP into the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program.

Understanding what the evidence says is more important than ever.

Read “Myths of Mandatory International Reference Pricing for Prescription Drugs” in Health Affairs Forefront now.

About the National Pharmaceutical Council

NPC serves patients and society with policy-relevant research on the value of patient access to innovative medicines and the importance of scientific advancement. We envision a world where advances in medicine are accessible to patients, valued by society, and sustainably reimbursed by payers to ensure continued innovation. For more information, visit www.npcnow.org and follow NPC on LinkedIn.

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