

## Defying Governmental Opinions and Safety Concerns, Millions of Americans Turn to Non-Traditional Online Pharmacies

### comScore Networks Releases Analysis of Consumer Perspective on Online Pharmacies

RESTON, Va., April 4, 2005 – comScore Networks today released key findings from a study focused on the opinions, attitudes and observed behaviors of visitors to online pharmacies. Among other findings, the study revealed that despite safety concerns, a significant percentage of visitors to online pharmacies believe the sites provide an affordable and appealing alternative to traditional methods of buying prescription drugs.

The study is based on an integrated analysis of observed behavior and self-reported attitudes among participating consumers. Self-reported information was collected via a survey\* of visitors to both traditional pharmacy Web sites (e.g. Walgreens.com and Drugstore.com) and non-traditional pharmacy Web sites (i.e. those that do not require an existing prescription).

17 Million Americans Visited Online Pharmacies in Q4 A comScore analysis of traffic to more than 3,000 traditional and non-traditional online pharmacies, both in the U.S. and abroad, revealed that 17.4 million people visited these sites in Q4 2004. This represents an increase of 14 percent from Q3 2004. Approximately 63 percent (10.9 million) of these visitors visited non-traditional pharmacy sites, up 36 percent from the previous quarter.

While Safety is a Major Concern, Consumers Are Willing to Buy Unapproved Drugs "A majority of online pharmacy visitors reported concerns about the safety and legality of buying drugs online, but the perception that e-commerce offers lower costs and greater convenience is weighing heavily on consumer decisions," said Bridget O'Toole, senior vice president of comScore Networks. "Interestingly, 62 percent of respondents feel some prescription drugs that have been proven effective should be available to the public despite possible secondary effects – even in light of the recent controversy surrounding COX-II drugs."

#### Attitudes and Opinions Related to Online Pharmacies

Source: comScore Networks

Respondent Base: Visitors to Online Pharmacy Sites

n=315 Agree Neutral Disagree I am very concerned about the safety of drugs available online 54% 16% 30% I believe that online pharmacies are providing healthy competition to regular pharmacies 66% 21% 12% Some prescription drugs that have been proven effective should be available to the public despite secondary effects, under direct supervision of a healthcare professional 62% 18% 21%

While more than half of all respondents reported concerns about the safety of drugs available online, almost 40 percent said that if they could buy drugs that are not FDA-approved, but that work well for them, they would do so.

#### Attitudes and Opinions Related to the FDA

Source: comScore Networks

Respondent Base: Visitors to Online Pharmacy Sites

n=315 Agree Neutral Disagree The FDA should regulate all drugs that are consumed in the U.S. 51% 20% 30% If I could buy drugs online that are not FDA approved but work for me, I would 38% 17% 45%

Furthermore, physicians may not be aware of drugs purchased online by their patients. The study revealed that 61 percent of the respondents did not inform their physicians of their last online prescription purchase.

Price and Convenience Are the Leading Reasons for Using Online Pharmacies comScore's survey of online pharmacy visitors revealed that price and convenience are the leading reasons consumers visit pharmacy sites and purchase drugs online. Fully 45 percent of visitors to online pharmacies reported that they visited in order to compare prices. Among those consumers who reported purchasing drugs online, nearly two-thirds said that they did so to save money.

Nonetheless, the majority of online pharmacy visitors surveyed are concerned about the safety and legality of buying drugs online. Remarkably, despite these safety concerns, only one out of every three respondents using an online pharmacy was concerned about the lack of face-to-face communication with a pharmacist.

"Given undeniable benefits to consumers in both convenience and price, online pharmacies have grown in popularity and are likely to continue to do so," continued Ms. O'Toole. "Considering this reality, it is essential for manufacturers, healthcare professionals and government to develop educational campaigns that address safety and other related issues in order to ensure consumer well-being."

To learn more about comScore Pharmaceutical Solutions, please contact [pharma@comscore.com](mailto:pharma@comscore.com).

\*Based upon a comScore survey, conducted in February 2005, of 315 consumers who visited traditional or non-traditional online pharmacy sites.

#### About comScore Networks

comScore Networks provides unparalleled insight into consumer behavior and attitudes. This capability is based on a massive, global cross-section of more than 2 million consumers who have given comScore explicit permission to confidentially capture their browsing and transaction behavior, including online and offline purchasing. comScore panelists also participate in survey research that captures and integrates their attitudes and intentions. Through its patent-pending technology, comScore measures what matters across a broad spectrum of behavior and attitudes. comScore consultants apply this deep knowledge of customers and competitors to help clients design powerful marketing strategies and tactics that deliver superior ROI. comScore services are used by global leaders such as AOL, Yahoo!, Verizon, Best Buy, The Newspaper Association of America, Tribune Interactive, ESPN, Nestlé, Bank of America, Universal McCann, the United States Postal Service, GlaxoSmithKline and Orbitz. For more information, please visit [www.comscore.com](http://www.comscore.com).

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