



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Office of the General Counsel
Washington, D.C. 20201

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL
JUNE 18, 2021

***Withdrawing Advisory Opinion 20-06 on Contract Pharmacies under the 340B Program
(issued December 30, 2020)***

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is withdrawing Advisory Opinion 20-06 (Opinion) in light of ongoing confusion about the scope and impact of the Opinion.

The Opinion has been challenged in lawsuits brought by various drug manufacturers. *See AstraZeneca Pharma. LP v. Becerra et al.*, 21-cv-27 (D. Del.); *Eli Lilly and Co. et al. v. Becerra et al.*, 21-cv-81 (S.D. Ind.); *Sanofi-Aventis U.S. LLC v. HHS et al.*, 21-cv-634 (D.N.J.); *Novo Nordisk Inc. et al. v. HHS et al.* (D.N.J.). The Opinion was never intended to do what plaintiffs in those suits allege: to create new, binding obligations on plaintiffs or to serve as the predicate for enforcement against those plaintiffs. As stated in the Opinion, it was meant to “set forth the current views of [OGC]” on the proper interpretation of the statute without “the force or effect of law.” Opinion at 8.

OGC maintains that the Opinion was not intended to impose new, binding obligations on regulated entities, and we respectfully disagree with the decision of the District Court in *AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals*. However, in the interest of avoiding confusion and unnecessary litigation, OGC withdraws the Opinion.

OGC notes that its withdrawal of the Opinion does not impact the ongoing efforts of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to enforce the obligations that 42 U.S.C. § 256b places on drug manufacturers, including HRSA’s May 17, 2021 violation letters concerning restrictions placed on contract pharmacy arrangements. HRSA’s enforcement process operated independently from the issuance of the Opinion, and operates independently from the Opinion’s withdrawal.

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