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STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE

POLICE STATE CAPITOL  
ALASKA 998  
1990

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

January 26, 1990

SUBJECT: Out-of-state pharmacies and licensing requirements (Work Order No. 6-2018)

TO: Representative Curt Menard  
Attn: Iola Young

FROM: John B. Gaguine ~~DB~~  
Legislative Counsel

You have asked for a bill that would require out-of-state pharmacies doing business within the state (primarily out-of-state pharmacies soliciting and filling mail orders) to meet the requirements of licensing for in-state pharmacies. I am writing this memo to explain that there are essentially no requirements for in-state pharmacies, and that control of out-of-state mail order pharmacies can probably be better achieved through a different bill.

Under AS 08.80, the Board of Pharmacy regulates and licenses both pharmacies and pharmacists. Unlike the stringent requirements for issuance of a pharmacist license, however, there are virtually no requirements for a pharmacy license. AS 08.80.157 provides:

(a) If an applicant furnishes proof satisfactory to the board that the applicant is equipped with land, facilities, and equipment, in fee or leased, necessary to carry on the business described in the application and the applicant complies with this chapter, applicable regulations adopted by the board, and pays fees provided for under AS 08.80.160, the board may issue

(1) a wholesale drug dealer license to an applicant who manufactures or distributes noncontrolled legend drugs to licensed retail pharmacists, dentists, physicians, surgeons, or veterinarians, who may legally purchase noncontrolled legend drugs at a wholesale level, or to government

agencies which may legally purchase noncontrolled legend drugs at a wholesale level;

(2) a wholesale drug dealer license to a qualified applicant who is in compliance with the Federal Controlled Substance Act of 1969 as amended;

(3) a license to a retail pharmacy.

(b) A license under this section may not be issued to a person who has been convicted of a wilful violation of a federal law or a law of any state relating to a drug or controlled substance, or who is addicted to a drug or controlled substance. A license may not be issued to a corporation with a managing officer who has been convicted of a wilful violation of a federal law or a law of any state relating to a drug or controlled substance, or who is addicted to a drug or controlled substance.

The specific requirements listed in subsection (a) - land, facilities, and equipment - obviously would be met by any out-of-state pharmacy capable of filling orders in Alaska. The "no conviction" provision of (b) is likely equally meaningless, as such a provision is likely found in virtually all state licensing acts. (I examined the pharmacy licensing statutes of several states, and they all had such a provision.) The other provisions in AS 08.80 concerning pharmacies, rather than pharmacists, are so vague as to be useless in regulating out-of-state pharmacies; see, e.g., AS 08.80.230 (pharmacy must have proper sanitary appliances and maintain orderly and sanitary premises). Most important, the Board of Pharmacy, which could issue regulations giving some meaning to these vague provisions, has to date not done so, likely because there have been major problems with duty pharmacies.

I would suggest instead an approach along the line of California's, which requires the out-of-state pharmacy to submit proof of compliance with the licensing laws of the pharmacy's state of residence, and also allows the California board to request information. I am enclosing

Representative Curt Menard  
Page 3  
January 26, 1990

copies of the relevant California statutes. If this approach appeals to you, I can draft a bill based on those statutes (but likely far simpler). Or I can draft a bill along the lines of your request, that an out-of-state pharmacy must meet Alaska qualifications, in the hope that the Board of Pharmacy will someday issue the necessary regulations.

JBG:gc  
G13/071

Enclosure

STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU ALASKA 99811  
207 462 3800

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

February 6, 1990

SUBJECT: Pharmacy licensing requirements in other  
states (Work Order No. 6-2115)

TO: Representative Curt Menard  
Attn: Iola

FROM: John B. Gaguine <sup>JBG</sup>  
Legislative Counsel

Per your request, I have been looking at the pharmacy licensing requirements in some of the other Western states. In all of the statutes I have examined, a pharmacy can be licensed if it complies with the pharmacy laws, which is essentially the same requirement as is found in AS 18.-80.157. (Sometimes there are minor additional requirements, such as the North Dakota requirement that a pharmacy must possess the standard pharmaceutical reference book to get licensed.) However, the majority of the other statutes I looked at regulate pharmaceutical practices considerably more closely than do Alaska's laws and regulations, and all of them regulate at least as closely as Alaska. For your interest I am enclosing some of the statutes of Nevada (since that is the location of the mail-order pharmacy under the revised state employee health care program) and Washington (since Seattle pharmacies can logically be expected to enter the mail-order prescription drug business).

Incidentally, I found that Wyoming has adopted an out-of-state pharmacy law that is also apparently based on the California statute on which I modeled W.O. 6-2018A. North Dakota, on the other hand, takes a different approach, requiring out-of-state pharmacies doing mail-order business in that state to get a license from the North Dakota board. I am enclosing a copy of the North Dakota statute. I think that the approach taken by the California law is better, since I do not think that the Alaska board (or the North Dakota board, for that matter) would be able to effectively

*legal services memoranda*

Representative Curt Menard  
Page 2  
February 6, 1990

regulate an out-of-state pharmacy. Hence requiring it to get an Alaska license would not, in my opinion, accomplish much.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

JBG:lmb  
L9/095

Enclosures

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION DIVISION OF RETIREMENT & BENEFITS

PLEASE REPLY TO:

P.O. BOX CR  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0203  
PHONE: (907)465-4460

Fax# 465-3086

701 EAST TUDOR ROAD, SUITE 240  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-7445  
PHONE: (907) 563-5885

Public Employees Retirement System  
Teachers Retirement System  
Judicial Retirement System  
Elected Public Officers Retirement System  
National Guard Retirement System  
Territorial Retirement System  
Retirees Voluntary Dental-Vision-Audio Plan  
Supplemental Benefits System  
Group Health/Life Insurance Benefits  
Deferred Compensation Plan  
Public Employers Social Security Contributions

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

March 19, 1990

The Honorable Curt Menard  
Alaska House of Representatives  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Menard:

Your staff requested an analysis from this division of the impact HB 508 would have on the health insurance plan for State of Alaska employees.

The health insurance plan that was negotiated last summer by the Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA) includes a provision for prescription drugs to be obtained through the mail. I have reviewed HB 508 and do not see any provisions that would be at cross purposes with the current negotiated agreement with ASEA or increase the cost of health insurance premiums.

The mail order prescription drug plan is provided by National Pharmacies, Inc. through a subcontract with Aetna, our health insurance carrier. I have also discussed the bill's requirements with Aetna and have been informed that National Pharmacies would currently be able to satisfy these requirements.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Coughlin  
Deputy Director

MBC/ksl

cc: Sally Smith  
Director  
Division of Retirement and Benefits

Lynn Withrow  
Aetna Life Insurance  
Seattle, WA 98111

Representative Curt Menard  
March 19, 1990  
Page 2

cc: (continued)

Frank S. Baxter, CPA  
Commissioner  
Department of Administration

Gary Bader  
Deputy Commissioner  
Services to State Agencies  
Department of Administration

Sioux Plummer  
Special Assistant  
Department of Administration

RB90-017

SB 125: An Act relating to pharmacies located outside of the state.

SB 125 establishes requirements for pharmacies located outside of Alaska to register with the Alaska Board of Pharmacy, if the pharmacy ships, mails, or delivers prescription drugs into the state.

The out-of-state pharmacy will be required to meet certain criteria established in the bill, including 1) registration of the names and locations of pharmacists who dispense prescription drugs to Alaska residents, 2) proof of maintenance of a current license and active pharmacy inspection in the jurisdiction in which the pharmacy is located, 3) compliance with all laws of the licensing authority within the jurisdiction where the pharmacy is located, and 4) proof that the pharmacy may readily retrieve the records of drugs prescribed to Alaska residents.

Currently, Alaska is not able to monitor or identify the out-of-state pharmacies who distribute prescription drugs to residents within the state. SB 125 will allow the Alaska Board of Pharmacy to require registration of outside pharmacies, thus providing some level of oversight -- albeit minimal -- of their activities in Alaska. The current lack of any review of outside pharmacies that mail, ship or deliver prescription drugs in Alaska raises consumer protection concerns.

Pharmacies located in Alaska are regulated by law to protect the health, safety and welfare of Alaskan consumers. Pharmacies located outside the state who service Alaska residents with prescription drugs should be subject to some degree of regulatory oversight. For this reason, the department supports SB 125.

*Glenn A. Olds*  
Glenn A. Olds, Commissioner  
Department of Commerce and  
Economic Development

Date: 3/20/21

GAO/RPB/JS/wfd2162W  
31891b

Commerce Position



RETIRED PERSONS SERVICES, INC.

March 25, 1991

The Honorable Curt Menard  
Senate of Alaska  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Re: Support for SB.125--Pharmacies Located  
Outside of the State

Dear Senator Menard:

I am writing in my capacity as Director of Governmental Affairs of the AARP Pharmacy Service and its Oregon subsidiary, the Oregon Retired Persons Pharmacy of Beaverton, Oregon. Our Oregon facility provides service to approximately 5,000 AARP members living in Alaska. This is to commend you for authoring and introducing SB.125, a bill to require the registration of out-of-state pharmacies which provide pharmacy services to residents of Alaska. The AARP Pharmacy Service strongly supports the enactment of SB.125.

Your bill represents a significant contribution toward enhancing and improving professional relations between pharmacies engaged in interstate commerce and the Alaska Board of Pharmacy. Just as important, the bill will serve to improve cooperation and communication between the Alaska Board and the boards of other states. Finally, the regulatory framework adopted by SB.125 is reasonable, realistic and based on sound constitutional principles.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "F. Nicholas Willard".

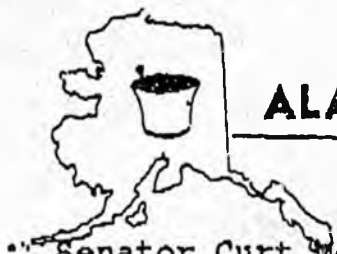
F. Nicholas Willard  
Director, Governmental Affairs

cc: AARP Alaska State Legislative  
Committee

500 Montgomery Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1563  
(703) 684-0244 Fax: (703) 684-0246

The Pharmacy Service of the American Association of Retired Persons

*letters of support*

**ALASKA PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION**

Box 10-1185 Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Senator Curt Menard  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska FAX 465-3756

March 25, 1991

Dear Senator Menard:

The members of the Alaska Pharmaceutical Association wish to convey to you their support of your bill SB 125. Mail-order pharmacy involves many significant realities, especially in the state of Alaska.

One very important reality is that the State has the duty to protect the health and welfare of its citizens. SB 125 addresses that duty with respect to those pharmacy businesses which are not resident in the state of Alaska and which do a preponderance of their prescription volume through mail-order dispensing.

The issue of mail-order pharmacy is of great concern to the members of the Alaska Pharmaceutical Association. The Association and its Board of Directors appreciate your efforts to address this concern. It is gratifying to have a Senator who not only listens to his constituents, but who also acts.

The Association will participate in your hearings tomorrow (March 26th) through Katy Fishel, Past President of the Association. We will continue to watch the progress of SB 125 with interest and support.

Please contact me if I can be of help as SB 125 continues toward passage, hopefully this term. I can be reached at 261-3078 or via FAX 261-3048. Or, you may write to me at the Association's address given above.

Sincerely,

Lynn E. Rodda  
President, Alaska Pharmaceutical Association

cc: Association Board of Directors



# Alaska State Legislature

Senator Curt Menard



While in Session:  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811  
(907)465-2679

Interim:  
165 E. Parks Highway  
Wasilla, Alaska 99687  
(907)373-2878

Senate District E

TO: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski  
Chair - Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee

FROM: Senator Curt Menard *Curt Menard*

DATE: March 7, 1991

RE: SB 125 "An Act relating to pharmacies located outside of the state"

I am writing to request that the above referenced bill be scheduled for a hearing before the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee at your earliest convenience.

There is a growing number of mail order pharmacies doing business in the state who are not accountable to their Alaskan customers. SB 125 addresses this consumer protection problem and provides reassurance to Alaskans who rely on those services.

This legislation requires any pharmacy located outside of the state that ships, mails, or delivers prescription drugs into Alaska on a routine basis to register with the Alaska State Board of Pharmacy. In order to register the pharmacy must provide specific documents that indicate compliance with licensing requirements in their home jurisdiction. The bill sets reasonable standards of disclosure to the Alaska Board of Pharmacy.

The most important requirement of this bill is the provision for out of state pharmacies to provide a toll free telephone services at least 40 hours a week and at least six days a week. When questions or problems resulting from prescription medication arise, it is imperative that the customer or medical responder be able to contact the dispensing pharmacist.

This legislation provides important measures to protect the health, safety and welfare of Alaskan consumers. Your support is greatly appreciated.



When an individual has questions about medication they receive from a mail order drug house the first place they go to is their local neighborhood pharmacist who can not provide adequate answers because they didn't fill the prescription. This bill has been introduced to eliminate that problem. It will not hinder the ability Alaskans now have to freely choose to do business through the mails with a reputable mail order pharmacist.

The bill requires out-of-state pharmacies to register with the state of Alaska. In order to do so they would have to provide:

- . Proof of a current valid license in the jurisdiction in which it is located and a sworn statement indicating compliance with the regulating authority of that jurisdiction. The majority of other states regulate pharmaceutical practices considerably more closely than Alaska and all of them regulate at least as closely as Alaska.

- . Proof that records of prescription drugs dispensed to Alaska residents are readily retrievable.

The most important provision, though, is the requirement for a toll-free telephone service. This will provide at least a minimum amount of customer service.

Most of the customers using out-of-state pharmacies are on maintenance medication. The form that the medication comes in may change with each purchase, the customer must be able to contact the dispensing pharmacist to verify that this is the same, and correct, medication.

Or maybe a prescription comes in the mail with "take as directed" on the label. Alaskan consumers need to be able to check the specifics of that instruction with the dispensing pharmacist.

If a problem arises, the doctor that attends to the patient must have immediate access to that vital information.

The bill has the support of the Dept. of Commerce and Economic Development, individual pharmacists and the Alaska Association of Pharmacists. It has a zero fiscal note and although the amount is not estimated--would generate revenue through an established registration fee.

This legislation was originally introduced late in the Sixteenth Legislature. The bill reference at that time was HB 508, the information in your packets that refers to HB 508 applies now to SB 125, the bill before you.

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110806  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0806  
PHONE: (907) 465-2534

April 6, 1992

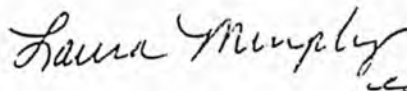
The Honorable Curt Menard  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Menard:

The Board of Pharmacy supports your bill CS 125 HES concerning registration of pharmacies located outside the state mailing prescriptions to patients located in Alaska.

Please keep me abreast of the bill's activity.

Sincerely,



Laura Murphy, Secretary  
Board of Pharmacy  
551 Raven View Court  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

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# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

**LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY**  
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
907-465-3800

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS database CMPR. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Mary Van Nimwegen

*March 16, 1991 minutes - Senate Health  
Education and Social  
Services Committee*



# Alaska State Legislature

*N*  
Senator Curt Menard



While In  
Session:  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska  
99811  
(907)465-2679

Interim:  
165 E. Parks  
Highway  
Wasilla, Alaska  
99687  
(907)373-2878

Senate  
District  
E

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 125 "An Act relating to pharmacies located outside of the state"

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The most important requirement of this bill is the provision for out of state pharmacies to provide a toll free telephone service at least 40 hours a week and at least six days a week. When questions or problems resulting from prescription medication arise, it is imperative that the customer or medical responder be able to contact the dispensing pharmacist.

This legislation provides important measures to protect the health, safety and welfare of Alaskan consumers. Your support is greatly appreciated.



*sponsor statement*

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**1992 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**FISCAL NOTE**

Revision Date: 03/24/92 Department Affected: Commerce & Economic Development  
 Title: An Act relating to pharmacies located outside BRU: Occupational Licensing  
of the state. Component: Administration  
 Sponsor: Senator Menard  
 Requestor: Senate HES COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|

**Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)**

| OPERATING              | FY 93      | FY 94      | FY 95      | FY 96      | FY 97      | FY 98      |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| PERSONAL SERVICES      | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| TRAVEL                 | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| CONTRACTUAL            | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        |
| SUPPLIES               | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| EQUIPMENT              | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| LAND & STRUCTURES      | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| GRANTS, CLAIMS         | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| MISCELLANEOUS          | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATING</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> |

|         |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| CAPITAL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

|         |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| REVENUE | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

|               |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| GENERAL FUND  | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| FEDERAL FUNDS | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0        |
| OTHER - GF/PR | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        | 3.0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> | <b>3.0</b> |

**POSITIONS:**

|           |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| FULL-TIME | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| PART-TIME | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| TEMPORARY | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

Estimate of current year impact: None

**ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)**

The bill establishes a registration requirement for out-of-state pharmacies who regularly deliver drugs to consumers in Alaska. There have been many inquiries made to the Board of Pharmacy about licensing requirements for out-of-state pharmacies; however, there is no way to estimate the numbers that may apply. (Continued on attached page)

Prepared By: Jennifer Strickler Phone: 465-2144  
 Division: Occupational Licensing Date: 03/24/92  
 Approved by Commissioner: Glenn A. Olds  
 Agency: Commerce & Economic Development Date: 3.24.92

## **Continuation of Fiscal Note Analysis - CSHB 125(HES)**

The contractual services cost of \$3.0 will provide funding for public notices of the new requirement, printing of applications, postage, communication expenses, and other contractual needs.

Information received by the division indicate that some States which currently regulate out-of-state pharmacies experience that most applicants come from the nearest surrounding states. Although we have no way of knowing the numbers of applicants that may seek registration under this bill, the division anticipates on establishing a registration fee that will cover program costs.

(7)  
Date Referred: March 30, 1992

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT  
FURTHER REFERRALS:

Labor & Commerce  
Finance

Date of Committee Action: 4-15-92

The HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES Committee considered: CSSB 125(HES)

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 125 (HES) REGISTRATION OF OUT OF STATE PHARMACIES

"An Act relating to pharmacies located outside of the state."

- RECOMMENDATIONS:  the same title  
 be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  a new title
- have attached amendments(s)  
 do pass  
 do not pass  
 no recommendations  
 individual recommendations  
 additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s): (Dept) APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_  fiscal note(s) Commerce 3/24

zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_  zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

| SIGNING DO PASS    | DP | OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS | DNP | NR | AM |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|----|----|
| <i>[Signature]</i> | ✓  |                       |     |    |    |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | ✓  |                       |     |    |    |
| Betty Davis        | ✓  |                       |     |    |    |
| <i>[Signature]</i> | ✓  |                       |     |    |    |
| Cheri Davis        | ✓  |                       |     |    |    |
|                    |    |                       |     |    |    |
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|                    |    |                       |     |    |    |

*[Signature]*  
CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

# Seniors: More drug use, more adverse reactions

by Jeffrey R. Richardson

Older adults use 25 percent of prescription drugs, more than people in younger age brackets. This makes them, as a group, proportionately more susceptible to adverse drug reactions, according to Cameale Johnson, clinical pharmacist at Humana Hospital-Alaska.

"Older adults are more frequently hospitalized due to adverse drug reactions," Johnson said. And medication misuse accounts for two-thirds of adverse drug reactions in the senior population, she said.

Drug side-effects that may be mild to nonexistent in younger people "may be significant in older adults," Johnson noted.

The phrase "adverse drug reaction" refers to any effect occurring from the use of a drug that is undesirable, including the failure to absorb the drug properly so it can address the targeted problem. A side-effect is a form of adverse reaction which can usually be anticipated because of the constituents of drugs and their known impact on the human organism.

Johnson said there are a number of reasons why people handle drugs differently as they age:

- To be effective, all drugs must be absorbed. Often changes in the gastro-intestinal system prevent

drugs from being readily absorbed.

- Drug effectiveness is dependent on good circulation. Throughout the aging process there are changes in the circulatory system which affect the ability of drugs to go to get where they are needed.

- Body composition, that is, the amount of fat or lean muscle tissue in a person, is a factor in the way the body handles drugs, since many drugs are taken up and stored in fat tissue.

"Probably the most significant one is the way we metabolize and excrete the drug," Johnson said. "The activity of the liver declines with age. Also, the kidneys don't always work quite as well. If they don't eliminate them, they're going to be subject to the toxic effect."

Johnson acknowledged it's easy to get prescription drugs confused, especially if a person is being treated for more than one condition. This raises the problem of adverse drug reactions resulting from drug interactions.

A number of steps can be taken to prevent harmful drug interactions. The most important is to utilize the services of one pharmacist who is familiar with your medical history and all of the drugs being utilized. In this way,

**'Medication misuse accounts for two-thirds of adverse drug reactions in the senior population.'**

- Cameale Johnson

interactions can be spotted that might be missed because doctors, or other pharmacists, don't know all the drugs a person is taking.

Johnson cautioned against storing prescription drugs in the bathroom, where they can rapidly deteriorate.

"It's the worst place you can store medications. It's a damp, humid environment," Johnson said. She suggested a hall closet, out of the reach of children.

Johnson also urges people to pay attention to the age of medications.

"I think it's important when you're no longer taking a medication to discard it."

Generally, drugs should not be kept longer than one year from the date the prescription was filled.

Johnson also warns people who tend to lose track of their dosages:

"In general, you should not double up on medications if you think you've skipped a dose,"

Johnson concluded.

*This information is presented by Senior Health Exchange, co-sponsored by Humana Seniors Association and Older Persons Action Group, Inc.*