



## *News Release*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For more information contact:  
Larissa Doucette, Editorial Manager  
847/391-4405; [custserv@nabp.net](mailto:custserv@nabp.net)**

## **Author Provides Insight Into Development of Dangerous Doses at Fall Educational Conference**

Katherine Eban, investigative reporter and author of the book *Dangerous Doses: How Counterfeiters Are Contaminating America's Drug Supply*, discussed how her book came to fruition at the National Association of Board's of Pharmacy®'s (NABP®) Fall Educational Conference on Friday, December 2, 2005, at the Trump Sonesta Hotel in Sunny Isles Beach, FL.

Eban stated, "There is no bigger nightmare for a pharmacist than to discover what is in the bottle is not what is on the label." While researching and writing the book over three years, Eban discovered the great extent of the problem.

Before becoming an author, Eban was an investigative reporter during a seven year period where she covered primarily medical issues. Eban became aware of counterfeit medications when a federal source contacted her and asked her why counterfeit medications are appearing on our pharmacy shelves. The source urged Eban to go to Florida, the center of many investigations concerning adulterated, expired, and counterfeit drugs entering the drug supply. There she learned that wholesalers were purchasing medications from smaller, or secondary wholesalers and licenses were given to convicted narcotics dealers.

According to Eban, "No one was interested in these crimes – these weren't 'drug crimes,' but people who are dependent upon medicine instantly understood this problem."

(-more-)

*National Association of Boards of Pharmacy • 1600 Feehanville Drive,  
Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056  
847/391-4600 • (F) 847/391-4502 • [www.nabp.net](http://www.nabp.net)*

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Eban shared with the audience that trafficking pharmaceuticals has become the “21st Century Gold Rush;” she explained that there is more money in pharmaceuticals than in trafficking illegal drugs. Eban further described that many of the counterfeit drug plots are developed in prisons – for example Lipitor® counterfeit plot was hatched in a Miami prison by a marijuana trafficker.

Eban explained that some unscrupulous wholesalers buy low and sell high and obtain the drugs any way they can – even through stealing. One method these wholesalers use to obtain the drugs is purchasing Medicaid drugs from patients. Once they obtain the drugs, the wholesalers then “clean” the bottles, which means they strip the prescription labels off of the bottles. Sometimes these drugs are paid for three times by:

1. The federal government via Medicaid
2. Unscrupulous wholesalers
3. The federal government via Medicaid again

According to Eban, once the wholesalers erase the origin of the drugs, they try to give these drugs a legitimate origin and sell them to law-abiding wholesale drug companies. Some of these companies act as “shell companies” – they have a pedigree to show that the medications are legitimate, but they really are not.

According to Eban, “Patients need to be told where their medicine has been.”

Even after completing her book, Eban still hears stories about other medications being counterfeited, medicines stolen from warehouses, and pharmacists discovering that the outside of bottles are sticky because the bottles have been “cleaned.”

*NABP is the independent, international, and impartial Association that assists its member boards and jurisdictions in developing, implementing, and enforcing uniform standards for the purpose of protecting the public health.*