

## **LEGAL ONLINE PRESCRIPTION ORDER-FILL PROCESS**

The legal online prescription order-fill process has many similarities to its brick-and-mortar counterpart. The prescription order-fill process starts with a physician authorizing a prescription to be filled for a patient. The physician (or the nurse authorized by the physician) will approve a prescription for a patient and send the authorized prescription to the online pharmacy and the pharmacy benefits manager. The pharmacy benefits manager will approve the prescription and inform the online pharmacy of the charges to be collected from the patient.

The pharmacy will order the pharmaceutical drugs for this prescription directly from the pharmaceutical manufacturer (or at times the wholesale distributor). The wholesale distributor and the pharmaceutical manufacturer are usually registered with the FDA and in compliance with the FDA regulations. If the pharmaceutical manufacturer is a foreign manufacturer, it will also be registered and approved by the FDA. The pharmaceutical drugs will be shipped, cleared through Customs, and delivered direct to the patient. The doctor-to-patient relationship and the FDA registration and oversight of the supply chain participants remain intact (see Figure 6.2).

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## **ILLEGAL INTERNET PRESCRIPTION ORDER-FILL PROCESS**

The illegal Internet prescription drug order-fill process starts with a patient initiating an order for pharmaceutical drugs to an Internet site. Most of the time a physician is not part of the process authorizing the procurement of the drugs. Some of the time the online Internet site will have a doctor or physician to authorize the procurement of the drugs, but there is no doctor-to-patient relationship.

The online or Internet pharmacy will order the pharmaceutical drugs from its wholesale distributor or directly from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. Almost all the time the pharmaceutical manufacturer is outside the United States. The drugs will be shipped directly to the patient or buyer. Sometimes a third-party logistics provider will be involved. The Internet site, the international pharmaceutical drug manufacturer, and if used, the wholesale distributor or third-party logistics provider will be absent of any FDA regulation (see Figure 6.3).