



NABP

National Association of
Boards of Pharmacy

www.nabp.pharmacy

1600 Feehanville Drive
Mount Prospect, IL 60056

T) 847/391-4406

F) 847/375-1114

TO: ICANN Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review Team (CCTRT)
FROM: Carmen A. Catizone, MS, RPh, DPh, Executive Director/Secretary
DATE: May 17, 2017
RE: Comments in Response to the CCTRT Draft Report of Recommendations for New gTLDs

The [National Association of Boards of Pharmacy](http://www.nabp.pharmacy)® (NABP®) commends the good work that the Competition, Consumer Trust and Consumer Choice Review Team (CCTRT) has put into its recent draft report and appreciates the opportunity to comment on its recommendations.

NABP is the independent, international, and impartial association that assists its member boards and jurisdictions for the purpose of protecting the public health. NABP is also the registry operator for the [.pharmacy Top-Level Domain](http://www.nabp.pharmacy) (TLD), as well as a founding member of the [Verified Top-Level Domains \(vTLD\) Consortium](http://www.nabp.pharmacy). As stated in the Consortium [charter](http://www.nabp.pharmacy), a vTLD requires verification of eligibility prior to use, adherence to standards, autonomy to take back a name, and ongoing verification. As a verified TLD, .pharmacy identifies online pharmacies and pharmacy-related websites around the globe as safe and legitimate.

Recommendation 14

NABP supports Recommendation 14 of the CCTRT, which states:

Create incentives to encourage gTLD registries to meet user expectations regarding: (1) the relationship of content of a gTLD to its name; (2) restrictions as to who can register a domain name in certain gTLDs based upon implied messages of trust conveyed by the name of its gTLDs (particularly in sensitive or regulated industries) and (3) the safety and security of users' personal and sensitive information (including health and financial information).

NABP believes this recommendation is in the best interest of the internet community, as it supports the creation of a trusted online environment that is user-friendly and free of bad actors and domain name system abuses. As noted in the CCTRT report, "The Nielsen surveys indicate that the public expects restrictions on who can purchase domain names, expects that such restrictions will be enforced and is concerned about the security of their personal and sensitive information." Encouraging gTLD registries to meet these expectations would be a win-win for consumers and registry operators alike.

Registries that already meet these consumer expectations by operating as verified TLDs contribute to improved consumer protection through registrant verification prior to domain name use and through ongoing monitoring of the domain space for compliance with registry standards. Internet users can trust websites within a verified TLD to display content that is relevant to the subject matter implied by the TLD.

The question is how to incentivize these activities, which can be costly to registry operators and, in turn, to registrants. One answer lies in formally recognizing the increased value of domains within registries that implement these practices. NABP recommends that ICANN exercise its influence to encourage search engines to prioritize such domains in their rankings as trustworthy, authoritative, and relevant sources of content.

NABP also points out that verified TLDs tend to be small, low-volume registries because of their registration restrictions. As such, the ICANN fees to such TLDs are disproportionately higher than for most TLDs. Given this disparate treatment, NABP further recommends that ICANN lower its fees for verified TLDs as a way to incentivize registry operators to meet user expectations.

NABP looks forward to an opportunity to provide further information to the New gTLD Subsequent Procedures PDP Working Group on its support of this recommendation.

Recommendation 16

NABP supports Recommendation 16 of the CCTRT, which states:

ICANN should commission a study to collect data on the impact of restrictions on who can buy domains within certain new gTLDs (registration restrictions) to (1) compare consumer trust levels between new gTLDs with varying degrees of registration restrictions; (2) determine whether there are correlations between DNS abuse and the presence or absence of registration restrictions; (3) assess the costs and benefits of registration restrictions and (4) determine whether and how such registration restrictions are enforced.

Having experience operating a registry with restrictions on who can buy and maintain domains within the TLD, NABP believes that the study described in this recommendation would provide valuable insight to the internet community. As an example of the type of information that may be gleaned from such a study, verified TLDs .pharmacy, .bank, and .insurance have restrictions in place regarding who can register a domain within those TLDs, and none of them have had any instances of abuse in the lifetime of the registry. NABP also understands the costs and benefits of operating a verified TLD, as well as enforcing registry requirements. As the CCTRT notes in the report, data derived from such a study would be useful in considering future policy decisions relating to whether restrictions should be encouraged in new gTLDs or included in new gTLD contracts.

Recommendations 25-30

NABP supports Recommendations 25-30 of the CCTRT – and particularly Recommendations 25, 27, 28, and 30 – calling for a study on gTLDs operating in highly regulated industries:

Recommendation 25. ICANN should perform a study on highly regulated new gTLDs to include the following elements: steps registry operators are taking to establish working relationships with relevant government or industry bodies;

Recommendation 27. assessment of a sample of domain websites within the highly regulated sector category to see whether contact information to file complaints is sufficiently easy to find;

Recommendation 28. assessment of whether restrictions regarding possessing necessary credentials are being enforced by auditing registrars and resellers offering the highly regulated TLDs (e.g., can an individual or entity without the proper credentials buy a highly regulated domain?);

Recommendation 30. comparing rates of abuse between those highly regulated gTLDs that have voluntarily agreed to verify and validate credentials to those highly regulated gTLDs that have not.

Having experience operating a restricted, or verified, gTLD in a highly regulated sector, NABP believes that the study described in these recommendations would provide valuable insight to the internet community. As an example of the type of information that may be gleaned from such a study, verified TLDs .pharmacy, .bank, and .insurance have restrictions in place regarding who can register a domain within those TLDs, as well as working relationships with relevant government and industry bodies, and none of them have had any instances of abuse in the lifetime of the registry. Data derived from the study would help to inform policy decisions regarding contracts for the operation of gTLDs in highly regulated sectors.

In regard to setting policy for new gTLDs, NABP believes subsequent procedures for new gTLDs should require a registry to operate as a verified TLD if it: 1. is linked to regulated or professional sectors; 2. is likely to invoke a level of implied trust from consumers; or 3. has implications for consumer safety and wellbeing. Verified TLDs contribute to improved consumer protection through registrant verification prior to domain name use and through ongoing monitoring of the domain space for compliance with registry standards.

Recommendation 35

NABP supports Recommendation 35 of the CCTRT, which states:

Collect data on costs and benefits of implementing various registration restrictions, including the impact on compliance costs and costs for registries, registrars and registrants. One source of this data might be existing gTLDs (for example, for verification and validation restrictions, we could look to those new gTLDs that have voluntarily included verification and validation requirements to get a sense of the costs involved).

Existing gTLDs that have voluntarily included verification and validation requirements could provide useful insight on the costs and benefits of implementing registration restrictions. NABP understands the costs and benefits of operating a verified TLD and may be a resource for gathering this data. NABP agrees with the CCTRT that this information would help to inform policy decisions regarding contracts with new gTLDs.