



Several human rights and anti-death penalty groups have asked the American Pharmacists Association to prohibit members from participating in executions, a request that comes as states increasingly turn to pharmacists for lethal injection drugs.

The groups, which include Amnesty International, the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union, are targeting drugs made by compounding pharmacies. Such drugs, which are not federally regulated, are individually mixed versions of medications that prison systems are finding increasingly difficult to obtain.

Death penalty opponents say such drugs put inmates at risk of pain and suffering. Two years ago, an outbreak of meningitis that killed 64 and sickened hundreds was traced to a compounding facility in Massachusetts.

Pharmacists who provide compounded drugs are violating key provisions of the pharmacists' association code of ethics, including helping patients achieve "optimum benefit" from their medications, according to a letter the death penalty opponents presented to the association on Monday.

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