

Wisconsin Pharmaceutical Price-Gouging Bill Announced

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Bill would give Attorney General power to investigate skyrocketing generic drug prices set by big pharmaceutical corporations to lower prices and protect Wisconsinites.

MADISON - At a news conference at the State Capitol today Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Senator Dave Hansen (Green Bay) and Rep. Jimmy Anderson (Fitchburg) announced new legislation that would empower the State Attorney General to block pharmaceutical corporations from price-gouging patients who depend on generic prescription medications.

Skyrocketing generic prices are harming families in Wisconsin and across the nation. A 2016 [G AO report](#) found that 1 in 5 generic drugs had an “extraordinary price increase” of at least 100%; 48 generic drugs had price increases by 500%; and 12 generic drugs had price hikes over 1000%. [Well known examples](#) are Albuterol (asthma medication) which increased 4,014%; Doxycycline (medication for bacterial infections) which spiked up 8,281%, and Pravastatin (heart conditions) which jumped 573%.

Pharmaceutical corporations have been pocketing the increases as profit, failing to give legitimate explanations for the shocking price hikes. Under the legislation, the Attorney General can petition the circuit court to enjoin price gouging, or compel a corporation to justify large rate

increases.



“It’s time to shine a light on what is becoming a very dark corner of the generic drug market,” said Sen. **Dave Hansen**, the Senate author of the bill. “People who can least afford it are getting squeezed by corporations and CEOs bent on generating bigger and bigger profits without any regard for the potential harm their greed is costing patients both in terms of dollars and personal health. This should not be an acceptable business practice here in Wisconsin.”



“Prescription drug prices are one of the leading out of pocket healthcare expenses for Wisconsin families. The ability of pharmaceutical companies to corner the market and set unreasonable prices hurts consumers, while doing nothing to improve treatment or outcomes,” said Rep. **Jimmy Anderson**, the Assembly author of the bill. “By enabling the Attorney General to order documents from drug manufacturers, we will better understand how drug prices are being set and how to control prescription drug costs. This legislation is vital in ensuring that our healthcare industry is focused on protecting Wisconsin families rather than simply kowtowing to the whims of massive drug manufacturers. It is imperative that we act now to protect Wisconsinites from exorbitant, unfair costs before this problem grows any larger.”

“As a practicing primary care physician I see first hand the growing financial burdens placed on patients and their families due to rising health care costs,” said Dr. Nike Mourikes at the news conference. “One in five Americans report skipping medication dosing or skipping prescriptions because of cost. This pharmaceutical price-gouging bill has come not a moment too soon, because the well-being and in some cases the lives of our fellow Wisconsinites hang in the balance.” (Dr. Mourikes is a member of Physicians for a National Health Plan and of Citizen Action’s Health Care for All Organizing Co-op)



At the news conference Courtney Waller, the parent of a child with a complex disease who is literally kept alive by prescription medications, told the story of the vulnerability of her family to prescription drug prices. “This is a story you hear time and time again from Wisconsin families who have children with medically complex diseases. And it is an issue which keeps many of us up at night.”

“The only way to protect Wisconsinites who rely on prescription drugs from exploitation at the hands of giant pharmaceutical corporations is to use the full power of our democratic government to even the playing field,” said **Robert Kraig**, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “In recent years the Legislature has abdicated its role as a public watchdog, and that needs to change. Senator Hansen and Rep. Anderson are to be commended for offering common sense legislation empowering the Attorney General to intervene on the public’s behalf when the greed of pharmaceutical corporations threatens the lives and livelihoods of Wisconsinites who depend on vital medications.”

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