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PRESS RELEASE

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BIG VOTE TOMORROW ON TRANSPARENCY ON HIGH-COST PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

- *Assembly Health Committee to Vote on AB 463 (Chiu) to Require Disclosure on the Pricing of Expensive Drugs*
- *Will Legislators Respond to Public Anger on Pharmaceutical Costs?*
- *Several Policy Efforts (Bills & Initiatives) Expected on This Issue This Year*

SACRAMENTO-- The issue of prescription drug will start to come into focus in California politics tomorrow with the Assembly Health Committee hearing of AB 463 (Chiu) to require greater transparency on how high-cost medications are priced. Consumer groups, labor, business, and insurer groups support the legislation, which is vigorously opposed by the pharmaceutical industry.

"The public is outraged and patients are puzzled why certain prescription drug cost so much--creating a real financial barrier to care for many who are uninsured or underinsured," said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition. "From new treatments costing \$1,000 a pill to huge price spikes for decades-old medications, Californians are right to ask why drugs costs so much. When patients cannot afford their medication, research shows that they skip doses, they cut pills in half, and they don't fill their prescription. This is a life and death issue: by not adhering the medication regimes, Californians live sicker and could die younger."

"The prescription drug industry uses the money they get from patients to aggressively protect their profits. They spent a record-breaking \$80 million against the last ballot measure on this topic a decade ago," said Wright, the sponsor of that measure, Prop 79 in 2005, which would have allowed California to use its bargaining power to provide drug discounts. "Public anger has spurred this bill and several other efforts this year to address the issue of high-priced medications. Big Pharma may have big money, but every voter is related to someone personally concerned about the rising cost of prescription drugs, and politicians ignore that at their peril."