

PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, September 29, 2016

THE FIGHT CONTINUES ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS WITH TODAY'S EPIPEN HEARING

- *EpiPen Price Spikes Merit Not Just Legislative Scrutiny, But Action, Say Patient Advocates*
- *Last Month, Big Pharma Successfully Sought to Gut SB1010 (Hernandez), a Key Prescription Drug Transparency Bill, in Assembly Appropriations Committee.*
- *Health Access California and Other Consumer Advocates Vow Continued Campaign for Reform. Public Attention and Anger at Prescription Drug Prices Continues to Climb, Which Politicians Ignore at Their Own Peril.*

LOS ANGELES, CA - Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition, will join other consumer advocates and health industry stakeholders to testify on the need for prescription drug pricing transparency and reform at today's Senate Health Committee hearing, chaired by Senator Ed Hernandez. The testimony will examine EpiPen pricing, focusing on the history and price spikes of epinephrine auto-injectors, which are more than \$600 for a two-pack.

Mylan, the company that makes EpiPens, has an effective monopoly on the device, allowing them to raise prices at their own whim. This significantly raises the cost insurers have to pay for the drug, thus increasing the price of medical care for people with life-threatening allergies through no fault of their own. Health Access California has long sought to put a spotlight on skyrocketing drug prices and provide transparency to ensure affordable and accessible prescription drugs for Californians which included co-sponsoring SB1010 (Hernandez) this year. Senator Hernandez also authored [Senate Joint Resolution 29](#) in the last days of session urging the federal government to right the ship on EpiPen pricing.

WHAT: Senate Health Committee Informational Hearing on the EpiPen and drug pricing.

WHO: Senate Health Committee Chair Senator Hernandez, members of the committee and panelists (patients, families and providers), including Beth Capell, Health Access California.

WHEN: Thursday, September 29 at 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Los Angeles Law Library, 301 W. First Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

WHY: The purpose of this hearing is to show the history and impact of EpiPen pricing in California. Patients, families, and providers will talk about how price increases over the past decade, coupled with changes to state and federal policies, have impacted access to this life-saving drug. The committee will explore some of the ways that Mylan had increased public

awareness of their product and promoted policies that attempt to ensure its purchase by individuals and institutions while shielding the public from the true costs.

“EpiPen and every new high-priced drug or unjustified price spike only increases public attention and anger on this issue. California can’t allow unexplained price hikes of prescription drugs to continue to harm our health system and our families’ finances,” said Anthony Wright, executive director of Health Access California, the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition and co-sponsor of SB 1010 with the California Labor Federation this past year. “Despite the drug company's spending and the policy setbacks this year, public demand on prescription drug prices will force reform. Big Pharma may have lots of lobbyists and money, but every voter knows someone personally who must take several prescriptions, or who needs to carry an EpiPen, and faces these unjustified prices. The time for transparency and prescription drug price reform is now.”

"Mylan has chosen to offer a generic alternative but one that is still three times as expensive as the drug and device were in 2007. Mylan in its pricing of EpiPen is abusing its effective monopoly of the drug and device. Action must be taken at both the state and federal level to prevent such profiteering by the pharmaceutical industry." said Beth Capell of Health Access California as part of her testimony today.

LIVESTREAM available here beginning at 10:30am: https://youtu.be/t4Ff_uzcD_4

Click here for the committee hearing [agenda](#) and [background paper](#).

Open to all credentialed media – Please send RSVP to Diana.Crofts-Pelayo@sen.ca.gov.

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About Health Access California

Health Access California is the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition, advocating for the goal of quality, affordable health care for all Californians. We represent consumers in the legislature, at administrative and regulatory agencies, in the media, and at public forums. For more information, please visit www.health-access.org.

